

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 14 NOVEMBER 2016</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Refurbishment of Fairfield Halls - update</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Negrini, Chief Executive Paula Murray, Creative Director Colm Lacey, Director of Development</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Alison Butler, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration and Planning Councillor Timothy Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>All</b>
<p><b>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:</b></p> <p>The Corporate Plan (2015 – 2018) sets out how the Council will deliver on three key ambitions:</p> <p>GROWTH – creating growth in our economy</p> <p>INDEPENDENCE – helping residents be as independent as possible</p> <p>LIVEABILITY – creating a welcoming, pleasant place in which local people want to live</p> <p>The corporate plan contains the Council’s contribution to Croydon’s Community Strategy (2014 – 2018) developed by Croydon’s Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The recommendation within this report addresses the priorities for developing Croydon as an attractive place in which to live, work and visit. The new refurbishment of Fairfield Halls will address the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Enterprising City – a place renowned for its enterprise and innovation with highly adaptable and skilled workforce and diverse and responsive economy</li> <li>• A Learning City – a place that unleashes and nurtures local talent, is recognised for its culture of lifelong learning and ambitions for children and young people</li> <li>• A Creative City – a place noted for culture and creativity – one of the best incubators of new artistic and sporting talent in the country</li> <li>• A Connected City – a place defined by its connectivity and permeability with one of the best digital, communications and transport networks in the country</li> </ul> <p>The refurbishment of Fairfield Halls will play a significant role in contributing and benefiting from the regeneration and growth of the borough; improving the attractiveness of Croydon as a destination, as well as an increased sense of belonging, wellbeing and independence through increased participation in a broad range of cultural, educational, community and artistic activities.</p>	
<p><b>AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON &amp; WHY ARE WE DOING THIS:</b></p> <p>This work will help the Council meet the aspirations in Ambitious for Croydon by</p>	

creating an innovative and inspiring area with Fairfield Halls at the centre of it. The Halls will be central to creating a lively and sustainable mix of commercial, residential, cultural, educational uses and a well-connected and high quality public realm

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

The council investing £30m in the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls. The formal tender process is being undertaken with the expectation that there will be no revenue support from Croydon Council which would represent a saving of £750,000 from the previous arrangement.

### **KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:**

This is not a key decision

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 1.1 Note the update on the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls

### **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This paper presents an update on the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls which was presented to cabinet as part of the “Cultural and Educational Quarter Regeneration” paper which was agreed by Cabinet in October 2015 and set out the regeneration strategy for the College Green area.
- 2.2 The College Green development has been the subject of several previous Cabinet reports and comprises a £30m investment into Fairfield Halls, a circa 200,000 sqft new college/university building and approximately 2,000 new residential units alongside new public realm, retail and leisure space.
- 2.3 A hybrid planning application, led by Mott MacDonald, Rick Mather Architects and Turley was submitted in February 2016 and it is due to be considered by planning committee by January 2017. The scheme places the Fairfield Halls at the heart of the new Cultural and Educational Quarter. It will provide a high quality facility which will not only enhance the borough’s cultural provision but also promote the economic development and regeneration of Croydon.
- 2.4 Fairfield Halls closed in July 2016, following the decision by Cabinet in October 2015 to close the building for the duration of the development. The building was handed back to the Council by Fairfield (Croydon) Limited.

2.5 This report seeks to update Cabinet on progress with the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls and the procurement of a new operator for the building.

### **3. REFURBISHMENT OF FAIRFIELD HALLS**

3.1 The refurbishment of Fairfield Halls is a key element in the wider Fair Field/College Green hybrid application the Council will seek to secure detailed consent on the 'Phase 1' element of the scheme. This detailed element will include a high quality mixed use scheme on Council owned land at College Green and the improvements to the Fairfield Halls.

3.2 The scheme places the Fairfield Halls at the heart of the new Cultural and Educational Quarter. It will provide a high quality facility which will not only enhance the borough's cultural provision but also promote the economic development and regeneration of Croydon.

3.3 The exceptional design will enable a transformation of the building aesthetically and commercially, whilst being sympathetic to the original design and heritage. The aim is to create a beautiful, highly flexible arts building which is commercially self-sufficient.

3.4 The building will be fully integrated with the surrounding area (above and below ground), and feature a new outward facing offer to the north (i.e. onto College Green from the Ashcroft Theatre façade) which will encourage additional visitors and customers. A new gallery space will be created in the basement car park to complement and enhance the cultural offer.

3.5 The design approach for the Fairfield Halls is practical and heritage led. It proposes improving the appearance of the building by:

- Restoring facades
- Replacing windows
- Rationalising and improving the soft landscaping outside the building
- New pavilion structure and lighting at the side of the Ashcroft Theatre to improve the relationship with College Green.
- Extending the forecourt and refurbishing and refining the canopies
- Creating a transparent and uncluttered façade at the front of the building

3.6 The design also focuses on improving the way the building functions, and internal improvements will include:

- Architectural lighting and signage, enhancing the quality heritage architecture
- New box office and “welcome” experience to improve the entrance and open up the foyer
- Improving the circulation of the building
- Improved disability access
- Creating more flexible spaces which can be used more intensively throughout the day and evening
- Replacing the seats in the concert hall and theatre
- Increased the stage size in the Concert Hall
- Improving the mechanical and electrical make-up of the building, creating the ability for different parts of the building to operate independently

- Improving the food and beverage, conferencing and theatre facilities
- 3.7 There have been several key changes made to the scope of the £30m project, as a result specifically of the participation in the Theatres' Trust Peer Review, which was held earlier this year, and also the soft market testing period as part of the operator procurement which is referred to in the next section. The importance of the front of house aspects of the scheme, within the design were emphasized in the review and the elements that would have a real impact on the customer experience such as the air cooling systems and the catering changes were highlighted as a key focus. More specifically, the changes to the Ashcroft Theatre will now include new seating and a new layout that will enable and increase in capacity to over 800 from its current 750. The original plans for a radical alteration to the get in at the back of the venue by knocking through a large entrance and installing two lorry lifts has now been taken out of the £30m scope for the reason that the cost and risk was not justified by the opportunities it would create. Instead, the team have a simpler solution whilst retaining enough space at the rear of the building to ensure any future changes can be accommodated.
- 3.8 To complement the new Fairfield Halls and enhance the area as a cultural destination, a new high quality public square is proposed in College Green and in the forecourt of the Halls. Subject to site analysis and budget this will include elements such as new trees, green spaces and water features as well new seating, areas of informal play, and a new outdoor performance space to complement the activity in Fairfield Halls.
- 3.9 New active frontages are proposed around the square with a range of uses including the new interface to the side of the Ashcroft Theatre to integrate the Fairfield Halls and College Green area.
- 3.10 The scheme has been positively received and the design team, Rick Mather Architects won New London Architecture (NLA) award for Fairfield Halls design in the Conservation and Retrofit category in September.
- 3.11 It was agreed at Cabinet in June 2016 to use Brick by Brick to bring forward those elements of the College Green scheme where the council holds land interests and/or options. This will at least include Phase 1 (the refurbishment of Fairfield Halls, the initial residential development, the enabling works for the college facility and some public realm works) and Phase 2 (the delivery of the new college building, the redevelopment of the existing college land and the remainder of the public realm works).
- 3.12 The process involves the transfer of land interests of the relevant parts of the site to Brick by Brick under terms as set out in Part B of the June 2016 report. Brick by Brick will complete the £30m package of improvement works to Fairfield Halls under licence.
- 3.13 Fairfield Halls closed in July 2016 in order to allow the commencement of essential first phase enabling works in the vacated building. This package of works includes:
- Securing site, hoardings and signage – completed August 2016

- Detailed asbestos R&D survey – completed September 2016
- Dimensional surveys – completed October 2016
- Structural, M&E and condition surveys and investigations – September 2016 to February 2017
- Soft strip out and removal of loose fittings – October 2016
- Phased asbestos Strip out – November 2016 to March 2017
- Strip out of engineering systems – December to March 2017

3.14 An asset management plan has been developed to ensure that key assets within the building are protected through the refurbishment scheme. This includes a package of works to protect and maintain the organ in the Concert Hall by Harrison & Harrison, a specialist organ firm, for the duration of the scheme.

3.15 Procurement of the refurbishment contractor for the next phase of works is running in parallel to the enabling works packages and will commence in January through to April 2017 for immediate implementation.

#### **4. OPERATOR PROCUREMENT**

4.1 Following a period of soft market testing which involved a number of potential operators visiting the venue formal procurement for an operator for Fairfield Halls commenced in October. The process is one of competitive dialogue and will be concluded by May 2017, giving an appointed operator over a year for the mobilisation in the lead up to the venue re-opening.

4.2 The service specification for Fairfield Halls is looking for a suitably qualified operator for the venue on a concession basis to provide a financially sustainable model of operation on the basis of no council revenue funding. There is a requirement in the tender for a balanced programme that includes high quality product across art forms and space for community and locally driven events. In addition to all the necessary technical and legal requirements, the specification also describes the aspiration for the venue to provide a welcoming environment with excellent customer service.

4.3 The procurement is conducted in several stages. The timetable is as follows:

- Advertisement going live – October 2016
- Deadline for pre-qualification stage – November 2016
- Invitation to submit solution – November 2016
- Submission deadline – December 2016
- Competitive Dialogue process – January/February 2017
- Invitation to submit final tender – February 2017
- Tender deadline – March 2017
- Evaluation complete – March 2017

The decision to award will then go to a May Cabinet meeting prior to a formal announcement.

#### **5. ADDITIONAL UPDATES**

5.1 In the week immediately after Fairfield Halls closed, The National Trust ran a programme of guided tours in Croydon called Edge City which highlighted the

Borough's stand out 1960s architecture. The walking tours culminated in a half hour tour of Fairfield Halls. The project was very successful both for Croydon and the National Trust with high levels of customer satisfaction and positive media coverage.

5.2 Croydon Museum is working with the Fairfield Arts Board to conserve and consolidate the archive material from Fairfield Halls. The project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and has a significant oral history element, gathering, preserving and presenting the histories of Fairfield Halls as it looks towards the next stage of its future.

5.3 A dedicated website has been developed to offer continual updated information on the progress of the refurbishment programme. This can be found at:  
<https://fairfieldcroydon.wordpress.com/>

## **6. PROGRAMME SUMMARY**

The indicative programme is as follows:

- Closure of Fairfield Halls – July 2016
- National Trust Edge City tours – July 2016
- Soft Market testing for new operator – August 2016
- Enabling works package (Hoarding, surveys, hard and soft strip out) – August 2016 – May 2017
- Invitation to Tender for new operator – October 2017
- Main refurbishment contract commencement – May 2017
- New operator in place – May 2017
- Opening by end of 2018

## **7. CONSULTATION**

This report is an update for noting, consultation relating to the decisions leading to this point has been outlined in previous reports to this Cabinet.

## **8. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS**

### **8.1 The effect of the decision**

This report is an update for noting and the effects of the decision leading to this point has been outlined in previous reports to this Cabinet. The budget for the capital works are set out clearly in the Capital Programme 2016/19.

### **8.2 Future savings/efficiencies**

The revenue savings and efficiencies relating to this project have been outlined in previous reports to this Cabinet. The procurement sets the expectation that there will be no subsidy from the council going forward.

### **8.3 Approved by: Richard Simpson – Executive Director of Resources**

## 9. COMMENTS OF THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1 There are no additional legal implications arising from this updating report. Please refer to previous Cabinet reports for aside from those set out in the previous report to Cabinet on this matter.
- 9.2 Approved for and on behalf of Jacqueline Harris-Baker, Acting Council Solicitor and Acting Monitoring Officer.

## 10.HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

There is no Human Resources impact as a result of this report

- 10.1 Approved by: Adrian Prescod, HR Business Partner: Place

## 11.EQUALITIES IMPACT

The refurbishments of Fairfield Halls will improve access to the building and spaces.

## 12.ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The refurbishment designs, in particular of all of the mechanical and electrical systems, have a strong focus on future sustainability. One of the drivers has been to significantly reduce the running costs of the building.

## 13.CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

The re-landscaping of the area around Fairfield Halls will have a significant impact in improving the public realm. The area will be better lit and signposted and will feel safer for users.

## 14.REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

This report is an update for noting, there is no decision to be recommended.

## 15.OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

This report is an update for noting, there is no decision and therefore no other options considered.

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**BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: none**

