

Local Members' Interest
N/A

Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee – 13th September 2016

Future Operating Model for Staffordshire's Arts Service

Recommendation/s

1. To consider the proposal for the Arts Service to vacate the Shire Hall and remodel the Arts Offer to realise a net saving of £62,223. This will enable the Arts Service to achieve their full Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) saving of £118,000 in 2017/18.
2. To consider the proposal that Strategic Property investigates alternative proposals for how the space in the Shire Hall can be used so that it is brought back into beneficial use and generates a revenue stream for the County Council to offset the £100,000 pooled property MTFS saving.

Report of Cllr Ian Parry, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Matters and Cllr Gill Heath, Cabinet Member for Communities & the Environment

Summary

What is the Select Committee being asked to do and why?

3. To comment on the proposals for the Shire Hall and the Arts Service.
4. The Library & Arts Service welcomes comments from the Select Committee which will be reported to Cabinet at its meeting on 21st September for it to take into account during its consideration of this matter.

Report

Brief Report Summary

5. This report outlines the proposal to redefine the Arts Service to realise a £62,000 Arts MTFS saving and proposes using the space within the Shire Hall differently to generate an income stream for the county council and offset the £100,000 pooled property MTFS saving.

Background

6. The Great Hall within the Shire Hall building is currently occupied by Staffordshire County Council's Arts Service and Wolverhampton University.

7. The rear of the building, formerly occupied by Stafford Library, has been vacant since September 2015 - with the exception of the Multi-Sensory Environment Room which is located at the side of the building and is also managed by the Arts Service.
8. There is currently a cumulative MTFS saving of £218,000 predicated on the County Council vacating the Shire Hall which was agreed by Full Council in 2014.
9. The saving breaks down as follows:
 - a. £118,000 Arts Service savings to be delivered by Culture and Communities
 - b. £100,000 pooled property savings to be delivered by Strategic Property
10. At present £56,000 efficiency savings have been identified within the 2016/17 Arts budget.
11. However in year, there is currently a £62,000 MTFS shortfall from the Arts budget and £100,000 from the Strategic Property budget.

The Arts Service

12. Staffordshire County Council's Arts Service current offer includes the following:

- a. The Shire Hall Gallery

- i. Shire Hall Gallery Team (4.75 FTE)
- ii. Exhibitions, events & activities programme
- iii. Craft shop
- iv. Multi-Sensory room (MSE room)
- v. Accredited museum - courtroom & cells

- b. Arts Development

- i. Arts Development Team (2 FTE)
- ii. £20,000 Community Arts Grants
- iii. £10,000 Arts Development Grants
- iv. £40,000 Service Level Agreement with the New Vic Theatre

13. 2015/16 visits to the Shire Hall

Total Visits to Shire Hall Gallery	76,862
Total Virtual Visits	26,658
Number of visit to the MSE room	3,032

14. The visits to the Shire Hall Gallery have reduced by 28% since the Library relocated to Staffordshire Place in September 2015.
15. Visits to the MSE room have remained more static with a visitor reduction of 4%.

The Shire Hall

16. The re-provision of the Arts Offer which was predicated on vacating the Shire Hall Gallery was first agreed by Full Council on Thursday, 13th February, 2014, subject to agreement by Cabinet and an agreed purchaser for the building.
17. When the original proposal to vacate the gallery was included in the 2015/16 MTFS a petition to "Save Stafford Shire Hall" was launched with the following wording: "we the undersigned petition the county council to reconsider and reverse the proposals to remove the library, gallery and other facilities from the Shire Hall and sell the building."
18. A 1,960 paper signature was presented at Full Council on 13 February 2014 by Councillor Maureen Compton. An additional 955 signature e-petition was received, giving a total of 2,915 signatures. The petition was discussed by the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee (PSSC) on 7 March 2014 under the Council's Petition Scheme.
19. It was resolved at the PSSC meeting on 7 March to further consider the issue at the committee meeting on 2 June. This discussion did not take place as following receipt of the petition the County Council was approached by Wolverhampton University who required a presence in Stafford town centre.
20. Since July 2014, the Great Hall space within the Shire Hall Gallery has been shared with Wolverhampton University under a licence agreement.
21. When the licence was granted to Wolverhampton University it was anticipated that partnership working would enable the gallery function to be delivered differently at a reduced cost. This ambition has not been realised and Wolverhampton University have now indicated that they no longer wish to occupy any part of the building.
22. Following the decision by Wolverhampton University, Strategic Property are now looking at alternative proposals for how the space in the Shire Hall can be used so that it is brought back into beneficial use and generates a revenue stream for the Council.
23. There is now a pressing need to realise the 2016/17 £218,000 MTFS savings that were agreed by Full Council on Thursday, 13th February, 2014.
24. £59,000 was saved by the Arts Service during 2015/16 through deleting a vacant post and a range of efficiency savings leaving an ongoing budget gap of £59,000 which was offset by managed vacancy control savings within the Culture & Communities budget.
25. Strategic Property anticipate that their £100,000 saving can be offset by using the Shire Hall differently and generating an income. There are currently no plans to sell the Shire Hall.

Redefined Arts Offer

26. To enable the Arts Service to deliver a minimum of £62,000 to achieve their full MTFS saving of £118,000 in 2017/18 it is proposed that the Arts Service is re-defined and vacates the Shire Hall.

27. Alongside this Strategic Property will explore developing the Shire Hall building as multi-purpose space.
28. In re-defining the Arts Offer we propose to:
- a. Focus on community arts provision, retaining Arts Development, Exhibitions and Community Arts officer posts to enable us to deliver the offer
 - b. Deliver County-wide 'Pop up' Service - utilising new and existing venues (SCC, Districts & Boroughs)
 - c. Cease to deliver an annual exhibition programme in the Shire Hall
 - d. Discontinue the craft shop & museum
 - e. Explore re-providing the multi-sensory room
 - f. Explore developing the Shire Hall building as multi-purpose space
29. This proposal will result in deleting 3.75 FTE which will give staff savings of £86,153 (including on costs) and the cost of redundancies will be in the region of £97,788.92.
30. We anticipate that there will be some income (in the region of £5,000) from pop up exhibitions but with a projected loss of £13,900 exhibitions income and £56,480 craft shop income the **net savings for the Arts Service will be £62,223** (this does not include the cost of redundancies or redundancy loan).
31. The timescales should the proposal be agreed are as follows:

Feasibility study commissioned	August 2016
Staff consultation	October 2016
Notice issued to staff	December 2016
Arts Service vacate Gallery/Great Hall	March 2017
New Arts structure implemented	April 2017
£118k Arts Saving delivered	April 2017

Link to Strategic Plan

Enjoying Life

32. Encourage local people to participate in social and leisure activities that they enjoy by promoting the attractiveness of the County to businesses and residents
33. Re-define the Arts Offer and create and manage a solution to the Shire Hall

Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity

34. The proposal for the Arts Service to vacate the Shire Hall was discussed by the Prosperous Staffordshire Select Committee under the Council's Petition Scheme on 7 March 2014.

Community Impact

35. The proposal has the potential to enable wider access to the arts offer across all age ranges within communities which could minimise disadvantage.

36. There is however a potential adverse implication of the proposal if the MSE offer is relocated or discontinued. This could impact on children and people with disabilities who use the MSE room. Alternative options for the MSE room are currently being explored.
37. However the County Council already provides alternative access to multi-sensory facilities in the following children's centres: Newcastle, Staffordshire Moorlands, Leyfields, Tamworth and Cannock. These are used by Children's Centre users and SEND children, young people and adults. There are also approximately 10 sensory suitcases, which include a range of sensory play equipment that can be hired from Children's Centres for use at people's homes.

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Appendices/Background papers

Appendix A - Community Impact Assessment