

HALLS, CEMETERIES & ALLOTMENTS COMMITTEE

Date: Monday, 5 June 2023

Title: Corn Exchange Business Plan

Contact Officer: Deputy Town Clerk – Adam Clapton

Background

During budget-setting for the 2023/24 fiscal year, Members asked for plans on the future direction of the Corn Exchange following installation of theatre and projection equipment.

Current Situation

Attached is a confidential, draft business plan for the Corn Exchange developed by the Venue and Events Officer. There are several areas awaiting completion including, financials, resources and detailed plans which will be drawn into a final version later this summer.

The capital investment made during the last four years has resulted in a high end, modestly sized facility capable of being the community arts facility originally planned. Members are asked to consider a Council view of the facility and if there is anything further they would like to see in its development. The former Council administration's realised vision statement for the Hall in 2019 was:

'To create a modern, accessible, and affordable arts venue for Witney and its community, capable of facilitating both local and professional arts and performances.'

In particular, the Committee is tasked with whether it would like to create a new vision/mission statement or/and objectives on how it would like the hall to operate in the future. For example,

- *Provide an affordable, sustainable, inclusive and community arts facility that is valued and supported by the people of Witney and West Oxfordshire.*
- *Provide availability to and encourage involvement from the entire community through offering a diverse range of music, arts and cultural events in the Corn Exchange.*
- *Provide a professional, well-maintained and run hireable space for private events including parties, weddings and conferences.*

Members should note, West Oxfordshire District Council provided funding of £32k towards the improvements based on the Hall being a community arts facility for the wider District.

Environmental impact

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Risk

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

Members and Officers must balance the use of the Hall as a private hire venue, its vision and its community use against commercial viability, resources and space in which the venue can expand further than it has already. The Council's ability to deliver enhanced and expanded professional services must be planned and scheduled with additional staffing, budgets and resources or else it runs the risk of lacking clear direction and wasting taxpayer income.

Financial implications

- The financial implications of the business plan will be determined in the final version later this year.

Recommendations

Members are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. A revised vision/mission statement for the Corn Exchange with the potential of values and objectives. This may tie into a larger Council project and;
2. To consider any further suggestions for the operation of the Corn Exchange which can be considered during the development of the final business plan.