

Corn Exchange Working Party

Date: 9th March 2020

Title: Lighting, Sound and Seating

Contact Officer: Venue Manager (Tomas Smith)

Background

This Working Party has previously identified the need to install retractable seating, new stage lighting and to soundproof the main hall following advice from consultants and agreement from performance groups. This will allow us to approach more hirers, companies and groups to use our facilities while offering a greater flexibility as a venue when considering new functions, productions and performances.

Current situation

Currently we are operating the Main Hall as a blank space as we have nothing else to offer. I'm asked daily about the prospect of retractable seating and lighting. As it stands, groups are bringing their own equipment with them, however not all groups have this and indeed, some do look to book elsewhere. I have approached Henley Theatre Services, JS Stage and Event Services and Centre Stage Technology to help with the lighting and sound (Appendix A) and CPS, Hussey Ltd and Audience systems to quote for the seating (Appendix B). All the seating will have a slightly different look and feel, but all will allow for a greater degree of flexibility when using the hall. The speed which we can turn around the main hall will become of vital importance as the hall gets busier so this should be a factor when deciding which route to go down.

With the stage lighting, I am happy to rely on the expertise of independent companies, I have varying quotes coming in, at different ends of the market. Some will be quoting to fit all lights for all eventualities, while others will be looking to give us a good starting point from which we can build.

Regarding soundproofing, this depends on the seating we will be getting. Once it is in situ, I recommend that we look to soundproof later when we know the needs of the endeavour.

Environmental Impact

There will be an impact having lighting and seating installed, but if we can minimise by using LED lights and sustainable/low impact seating covers we can be seen to be limiting this.

Risk

We need to ensure that the lighting and standards is up to the standard we require in order to maximise the versatility of the hall and complies with all necessary legislation.

Financial Implications

The quotes are attached, and summarised on the next page – which are confidential.

The Council has an earmarked reserve of £6461 towards the cost of lighting and sound.

The Council has Section 106 contributions for the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange which include:

- a. £45,000 from the Springfield Nurseries development.
- b. £12,500 from the Thorney Leys Development (Abbey Developments) *this to be split between Play Areas and the Corn Exchange – at the Council's discretion.*
- c. £100,000 from the West Witney Development (payable in stages – and not yet received).

The Council may be eligible to apply for a Community Facilities Grant from West Oxfordshire District Council towards the refurbishment of the Corn Exchange. A maximum of 25% of the total project cost can be applied for.

Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report and consider the quotes provided for Lighting, Sound, Seating and decide on how the Working Party would like to proceed – making a recommendation to Council.

Appendices

APPENDIX A – Lighting & Sound Quotes

APPENDIX B – Retractable Seating Quotes