

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 18 May 2015

Portfolio:	Leisure and Community
Subject:	Fareham Cultural Facilities Transformation
Report of:	Director of Community
Strategy/Policy:	Leisure Strategy
Corporate Objective:	Leisure for Health & Fun

Purpose:

To agree a vision for the transformation of the cultural facilities in Fareham and approve funding to undertake an architectural feasibility study to assist in the development of the vision.

Executive summary:

In March 2014 the Executive agreed new arrangements to transfer the management of Westbury Manor Museum to the newly established Hampshire Cultural Trust. The new Trust was formed following a strategic review of the arts and museum service in Hampshire that was commissioned by Hampshire County Council.

The new arrangements for Westbury Manor Museum included a three year funding agreement until 2016 and a commitment from Hampshire Cultural Trust, in partnership with Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, to develop a strategic vision for the integration of cultural facilities in the Borough of Fareham.

The cultural offer in Fareham is focused around three key facilities. Westbury Manor Museum and Ashcroft Arts Centre which are operated by Hampshire Cultural Trust on behalf of Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire County Council respectively. Ferneham Hall is managed directly by Fareham Borough Council.

This report sets out a strategic vision for the transformation of these cultural facilities aimed at providing first class cultural opportunities for the community that will add vibrancy whilst reducing cost and improving customer satisfaction.

Underpinning this vision is to reduce the current combined subsidy for operating the three cultural facilities by a target parameter of 40% through a combination of increased income and reducing costs.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

That the Executive approves:

- (a) the vision for the transformation of cultural facilities in the Borough of Fareham; and
- (b) up to £50,000 to fund the architectural feasibility study works to bring together Ferneham Hall and the Ashcroft Arts Centre as detailed in paragraph 24b) of the report.

Reason:

To progress the development of a vision to transform the cultural facilities in Fareham.

Cost of proposals:

The estimated cost of the architectural feasibility works to bring together Ferneham Hall and the Ashcroft Arts Centre is £50,000. It is proposed that this is funded from existing capital budgets of £850k set aside for Ferneham Hall and Westbury Manor Museum.

Appendices: None

Reference papers: Report to the Executive 3 March 2014 – Westbury Manor Museum – Hampshire Cultural Trust Proposals

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BOROUGH COUNCIL

Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	18 May 2015
Subject:	Fareham Cultural Transformation
Briefing by:	Director of Community
Portfolio:	Leisure and Community

INTRODUCTION

1. At the meeting on 3 March 2014, the Executive agreed new arrangements to transfer the management of Westbury Manor Museum to the newly established Hampshire Cultural Trust. The new Trust was formed following a strategic review of the arts and museum service in Hampshire that was commissioned by Hampshire County Council.
2. The new arrangements for Westbury Manor Museum include a three year funding agreement, which expires in 2016, and a commitment from Hampshire Cultural Trust, in partnership with Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire County Council, to develop a strategic vision for the integration of cultural facilities in the Borough of Fareham.
3. The cultural facilities include, Westbury Manor Museum and Ferneham Hall which are owned by Fareham Borough Council and the Ashcroft Arts Centre which is owned by Hampshire County Council.
4. This report sets out a strategic vision for the transformation of these cultural facilities and seeks approval for funding to undertake an initial architectural feasibility study. This study will assist in developing proposals to bring together Ferneham Hall and the Ashcroft Arts Centre on the current Ferneham Hall site.

VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF CULTURAL FACILITIES IN FAREHAM

5. Hampshire Cultural Trust and Fareham Borough Council have developed a vision for the future of culture in the Borough of Fareham. The main focus of the vision is to transform the existing cultural services with a focus on:
 - Providing first class cultural opportunities in the local vicinity;
 - Efficient use of tax-payers money, by reducing subsidies and creating stronger economic and community value;
 - Nurturing the development of local talent in the creative industries;
 - A programme of events in Fareham Town Centre, adding vibrancy;
 - Reduce operational costs whilst improving quality and customer satisfaction;

- Enhancing the role of culture in the town centre and high street regeneration by:
 - Adding vibrancy and attractiveness for a growing population, reflecting the Council's development ambitions;
 - Attracting a loyal customer base, in partnership with town centre businesses;
 - Embracing the visitor destination economy as part of a wider Fareham cultural package including: Titchfield; Porchester Castle; Fort Nelson Royal Armouries and Bursledon Brickworks.

Outline Proposal

6. To deliver this vision the current provision for culture in Fareham will be transformed through the following:
 - Bringing together the Ashcroft Arts Centre and Ferneham Hall arts and entertainment functions to create a programme of arts and culture that brings excellence to the doorstep.
 - Re-invention of the Westbury Manor Museum as a vibrant 'culture stop' in the high street, with pop-up exhibitions and events, a great café experience and retail outlet where customers can buy quality produce made in Hampshire.

CURRENT OFFER

7. The cultural offer in Fareham is focused around three key facilities. Westbury Manor Museum, Ashcroft Arts Centre and Ferneham Hall. Hampshire Cultural Trust currently operates two venues in Fareham on behalf of Hampshire County Council and Fareham Borough Council; Ashcroft Arts Centre and Westbury Manor Museum. Ferneham Hall is managed directly by Fareham Borough Council. The following provides a summary of these facilities:

- i. **Ashcroft Arts Centre** is a community-focused multi-purpose arts space which offers a dynamic programme of music, comedy and drama performance, as well as a diverse community arts provision. Approximately 60,000 customers use the Ashcroft annually, including 25,000 ticket sales, and the venue has a loyal community following. Facilities include an auditorium with 147 seats in a flexible seating bank arrangement, a dance studio that can be converted into a performance space seating for 140 people, a bar which can also be converted into a performance space and an art studio gallery space that seats 12 people.

The building is locally listed and in a good state of repair overall, with a major refurbishment of the interior within the last 10 years, air conditioning installed 4 years ago and a new arts studio created 2 years ago. It is located just outside the main town centre thoroughfare and does not benefit from passing footfall. However, it does have dedicated car parking facilities. It lies within 500m of Ferneham Hall.

- ii. **Westbury Manor Museum** is a community museum that tells the story of Fareham's rich and varied local history. The ground floor includes a café, temporary exhibition space and local studies area. The museum displays are primarily on the first floor with offices on the second floor. There is also a walled

garden to the rear of the property which is managed by the Council as a public open space. In 2013/14 there were over 26,000 visitors, but visitor numbers are currently declining.

Westbury Manor Museum is a grade 2 listed building and overall in a good state of repair, although no major works has been undertaken in recent times. The exhibitions and reception spaces are dated, tired and require re-energising and modernising. The venue is located at the end of the town centre pedestrianised shopping area, with parking available in the town centre car parks nearby. Fareham Bus Station is adjacent to the Museum.

- iii. **Ferneham Hall** is the largest arts and entertainment venue in the town centre. The facility offers a range of music, comedy and theatre shows and is also available for hire for theatrical productions, exhibitions, meetings, parties and weddings. The venue sells 60,000 tickets per annum and includes a 708 seat auditorium (including 500 capacity tier seating) and two function rooms (The Meon and The Octagon).

The current programme reflects more traditional theatre style entertainment that generally has a narrow audience appeal. As such income and attendance has remained static and therefore it is considered a more dynamic and innovative approach to programming is required to reinvigorate the venue.

Ferneham Hall is overall in a good state of repair, with investment in the roof, air-conditioning and boilers within the last 5 years. However, both the interior and exterior are both tired and dated and in need of modernisation. The building is located adjacent to Fareham Shopping Centre and the Library, with parking available in the adjacent town centre car parks.

CULTURAL MARKET PLACE

8. Acorn is an analytical tool used to understand consumers' lifestyle, behaviour and attitudes, together with the needs of communities. It is used to analyse customers, identify profitable prospects, evaluate local markets and focus on the specific needs of each catchment and neighbourhood.
9. Hampshire Cultural Trust has used Acorn to analyse the potential market place for cultural activities in Fareham Borough which has a population of 111,000 and Gosport Borough which has a population of 80,000.
10. Current evidence indicates that the primary catchment area for the existing cultural facilities in Fareham is around 8km from the town centre. This suggests that as a minimum the potential market-place for future facilities primarily includes the Boroughs of Fareham and Gosport.
11. A percentage of the local population from both Boroughs access culture through the current venues in Fareham. However, they are likely to also meet their cultural needs through existing provision in adjacent areas including Portsmouth, Chichester, Eastleigh and Southampton.

Current Market

12. Mosaic is a classification tool designed to describe typical characteristics of local neighbourhoods. Each postcode is classified into one of 61 different types, each of

which has a description of the typical type of person living at that location, based on the demographic and economic characteristics of the area and taking into account things like shopping habits, culture and lifestyles.

13. Hampshire Cultural Trust has used Mosaic to analyse the potential market place for cultural activities in Fareham Borough and Gosport Borough. The Mosaic data for the market segment, which traditionally feature highly for museums, indicates this market segment is currently under-represented (7% of visitors compared to 19% of residents). Further work is required to analyse in detail the current markets for both Ashcroft Arts Centre and Ferneham Hall. This work will be completed as part of the feasibility study.

DETAILED PROPOSAL

14. A clear objective of the vision is to create a high quality, cost-effective and sustainable cultural experience for communities living within 30 minute drive time of Fareham town centre and for visitors to the cultural heritage of Fareham and Gosport.
15. Consideration has been given to how this can be best achieved and the initial proposals for moving forward on this objective include:

I. Westbury Manor 'culture stop' on West Street:

The aim is to create a vibrant cultural heritage attraction at a key strategic location on Fareham West Street.

The attention of customers approaching from the pedestrianised West Street would be drawn by new signage and pavement layout that entices them into the gardens of Westbury Manor and into the building via the new main, garden entrance.

Inside, they would discover a ground floor transformed into a vibrant cultural space with pop-up exhibitions and attractions, a great café experience and a shop where customers can buy arts and produce made in Hampshire. The courtyard facing on to West Street becomes an outdoor extension to this space.

Upstairs, customers would find the local story of Fareham told through an engaging and imaginative combination of real objects and digital intervention. The second floor space could be considered for conversion into incubator studios for creative practitioners.

Westbury Manor Museum would play a key role in championing cultural activity across Fareham town centre, working with local businesses and community organisations to develop pop-up festival activity.

II. Amalgamation of Ashcroft Arts Centre and Ferneham Hall

Ferneham Hall would be re-designed to support the delivery of an exciting high quality performance arts programme that responds to modern agendas and meets the demands of the future.

A flexible auditorium would be created, designed to support such a programme. It would have a new build face, potentially designed by an emerging studio architect and would incorporate studio and workshop space, café, bar, box office and toilet facilities. Dependant on the programme, it may be advantageous to consider improvements to back-stage facilities.

Future arrangements for the use of the Ashcroft Arts Centre will be considered as part of the feasibility work.

16. The two venues (Ashcroft amalgamated into Ferneham Hall and Westbury Manor Museum) would be operated by a single team managed by Hampshire Cultural Trust.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Revenue Implications

17. Collectively Hampshire Cultural Trust and Fareham Borough Council currently invest at least £600,000 per annum directly into delivering the current arts and entertainment and museum service in the three Fareham venues. Additionally, Hampshire County Council retains the liability on repairs and maintenance for the Ashcroft Arts Centre.
18. It is proposed that the scope of this project includes a target parameter to reduce annual subsidy for operating the facilities by 40%, through a combination of increased net income and reducing costs.

Capital Implications

19. The capital costs associated with this scale of project are not identified and an estimate would be developed during the initial feasibility stage. However, pre-feasibility work undertaken to date, indicates that significant change could be delivered within the ball-park ranges of £3-5m and £5-10m, depending upon scale of ambition. This could include the following for the two cost options:

(a) £3-5m Capital Investment:

Ferneham Hall: Range of options to include reconfigure entrance area, re-energise and new signage/colour to external elevation, demolish Octagon Lounge and replace with 2 storey extension, immediate landscaping, renovate interior spaces (toilets, bar, Meon Room) and replace theatre seats (with current mechanism), possible feature roof;

Westbury Manor: Reconfigure entrance and building use as described in para15 (l).

(b) £5-10m Capital Investment:

Ferneham Hall: As option (a) plus reconfigure theatre layout, renovate and refurbish back of house, extensive landscaping.

20. Initial consideration has been given to potential fund-raising opportunities to provide the capital investment required, these include:

- Lottery Funding: Heritage Lottery Fund; The Power to Change; Arts Council England small capital grant;
- Trusts and foundations, including Gulbenkian, Esmee Fairburn; Peter De Haan Charitable Trust; Clore Duffield; Foyle Foundation;
- Private donations and corporate sponsorship;
- Crowd-funding and other initiatives;

- Sale of Fareham Borough Council owned land;
 - Fareham Borough Council;
 - Hampshire County Council.
21. Fareham Borough Council currently has £850k capital set aside for maintenance and redevelopment of Ferneham Hall and Westbury Manor Musuem and these funds could be made available to fund any future improvements.
22. It is proposed that £50k from these budgets be allocated to fund the feasibility works to bring together Ferneham Hall and the Ashcroft Arts Centre as detailed below.

NEXT STEPS

23. To begin the development of the vision and assess the different opportunities, early architectural advice was commissioned by Hampshire Cultural Trust to undertake a very initial assessment of the proposed scheme. The outcomes of this work have informed the report.
24. The proposed way forward in the first steps of developing the vision are set out as follows:
- a) An initial market-place and business assessment on the future of performing arts in Fareham, within a wider piece of work looking at the Hampshire context. The estimated cost for this work is £50k and will be funded by Hampshire Cultural Trust and Hampshire County Council.
 - b) An initial architectural feasibility exercise to RIBA stage 1 for the proposal to bring together the Ashcroft Arts Centre and Ferneham Hall, informed by the market-place assessment above. Outputs to include development of project objectives and outcomes, project budget, initial project brief, feasibility studies and review of site information, indicative drawings and sketches, initial view of procurement, programming and pre-application town planning discussion. It is intended that this is undertaken by an award-winning emerging architect, potentially Hampshire-based. The estimated cost of this work is £50k and will be funded by Fareham Borough Council with project management by the Council and Hampshire Cultural Trust.
 - c) An initial architectural feasibility exercise to RIBA stage 2 Concept Design for the proposal to make improvements at Westbury Manor Museum. This work will be undertaken by Hampshire County Council Architects as an `In kind` service to Hampshire Cultural Trust.
 - d) An outline business plan for the proposals to make improvements at Westbury Manor Museum which will be undertaken by Hampshire Cultural Trust.

TIMELINE

25. The following sets out the initial key milestones and actions to be undertaken in the development and implementation of the vision:

2015/16: Phase 1

- Establish a joint steering group with representation from HCT and FBC. **May 2015**
- Initial market-place and business assessment on the future of performing arts. **May – October 2015**
- Initial architectural feasibility work undertaken for bringing together of Ferneham Hall and Ashcroft Arts. **July-October 2015**
- Initial architectural feasibility exercise Westbury Manor Museum. **May-October 2015**
- Outline business plan for Westbury Manor Museum. **May – October 2015**
- Fundraising strategy for Ashcroft/Ferneham project. **March 2016**
- Reconfiguration of ground floor and new entrance/orientation at Westbury Manor Museum. **March 2016** (subject to funding)
- Funding secured for local history displays and creative studios for Westbury Manor Museum. **March 2016**

2016/17: Phase 2

- Redevelop local history displays and creative studios. **October 2016**
- Funding secured for Ashcroft/Ferneham project. **March 2017**

2017/18 – 18/19: Phase 3

- Ashcroft/Ferneham project delivery.

CONCLUSION

26. This report outlines a vision to transform the cultural facilities in Fareham into first class facilities that meet the needs of the community both now and into the future. The vision is being developed with collaboration between Fareham Borough Council and Hampshire Cultural Trust with support from Hampshire County Council.
27. The development of the vision is in recognition of the benefits to be gained from this unique opportunity to provide first class cultural facilities in Fareham and re-vitalise tired and dated facilities.
28. These benefits will include the opportunity for both the local and surrounding community to access a wide and varied range of cultural opportunities and assist with the vibrancy and regeneration of the town centre.
29. Underpinning this vision is to reduce the current subsidy for operating these facilities by a target parameter of 40% through a combination of increased income and reducing costs.