

**For General Release**

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>CABINET 15 SEPTEMBER 2014</b>
<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>CULTURAL QUARTER – REJUVENATING FAIRFIELD</b>
<b>LEAD OFFICER:</b>	<b>Jo Negrini, Executive Director, Development &amp; Environment</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER:</b>	<b>Councillor Timothy Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport</b>
<b>WARDS:</b>	<b>Fairfield</b>

**CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:**

**Croydon's Community Strategy 2013 – 2018**

This sets out the Council's priorities for developing Croydon as an attractive place in which to live, work and visit. The new Cultural Quarter and rejuvenation of the Fairfield Halls will address the following priorities:

- An Enterprising City
- A Creative City
- A Connected City

The new Cultural Quarter 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, community and artistic activities.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Cabinet agreed in November 2013 (Min A101/13) to progress the planning and design of an 'enhanced project' up to concept design stage C to modernise and improve the Fairfield Halls and deliver a scheme that will bring real quality and lasting benefits to the borough over the next 50 years.

This paper outlines how the project will be integrated into the wider College Green development and gives a baseline of budgets agreed up to date. Further work will be undertaken on the wider scheme and the creation of the Cultural Quarter including cost implications both in terms of capital and revenue costs.

**KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.:**

**This is not a key decision**

## **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 To agree the new “vision for College Green and the Fairfield Halls” as part of a “Cultural Quarter”
- 1.2 To agree the new integrated approach to deliver a rejuvenated Fairfield Halls and College Green development as one comprehensive scheme.
- 1.3 That Cabinet:
  - a) Agree that the Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director for Development and Environment be delegated authority to take such decisions as are necessary, including entering into any relevant agreements to progress the vision for the integrated College Green and Fairfield Halls and the development in line with the proposals detailed in this report.
  - b) Note that where progression of these proposals will entail entering into contracts, including those relating to the acquisition or disposal of land, these will be approved in accordance with the Council’s Tenders and Contracts Regulations and the Leader’s Scheme of Authorisations.

## **2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 2.1 This paper sets out the integration of a number of key strands of work to create a new Cultural Quarter for the town centre which places culture at the heart of the regeneration within the borough. The new Cultural Quarter will help drive the Council’s strategic aims to improve growth, liveability and independence in the borough.
- 2.2 Croydon, for the first time in many years, has an opportunity to achieve unprecedented regeneration. Delivery of the £1bn Westfield and Hammerson redevelopment of the Whitgift centre is on track to commence in late 2015; Connected Croydon, a £50m public realm improvements programme is well underway and work is progressing at East Croydon station, as part of the £20m investment for a bridge crossing and station improvements including the main concourse. Croydon also has the second largest education building programme in the country, with £320million being invested through the Council’s Schools Programme over the next three years.
- 2.3 Further to this, the council’s new Growth Plan sets out how we will deliver, amongst a number of objectives, new homes, including affordable homes, 16,000 new jobs, re-establish Croydon’s metropolitan Centre as Outer London’s office prime centre and London’s premier retail and leisure destination and revitalising Croydon’s district and local centres.
- 2.4 Culture is at the heart of the council’s ambitious regeneration and growth plans for Croydon and in this context the College Green area and the

Fairfield Halls holds huge potential. Creating a new Cultural Quarter with this area at the centre is one of the first steps in delivering on these ambitions for culture, which will enhance and complement the regeneration in the borough by involving and connecting communities, revitalising our district and local centres and improving residents' health and wellbeing.

2.5 To ensure the successful delivery of a Cultural Quarter with College Green and the Fairfield Halls at its heart, development proposals or interventions should conform with the planning context for the area such as the London Plan, Croydon Local Plan: Strategic Policies, the Opportunity Area Planning Framework (OAPF) and the Fair Field Masterplan. This states the area has the potential to be an innovative and inspiring area with a lively and sustainable mix of residential, cultural, educational, commercial uses and a well-connected high quality public realm. The Mid Croydon masterplan also supports the aims of the Cultural Quarter with cultural infrastructure and activities.

2.6 This report provides some background on the Fairfield Halls and College Green projects and sets out the new vision for the College Green area to be delivered by moving to an integrated approach for the two projects.

2.7 The report seeks to:

- Agree the new vision for the College Green area including the Fairfield Halls as a key part of the boroughs new "Cultural Quarter"
- Agree the integration of the College Green and Fairfield Halls Modernisation projects to form one comprehensive approach to realise this vision for the area
- Agree to delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director for Development and Environment to progress the project.

### **3. THE VISION FOR COLLEGE GREEN AND A "CULTURAL QUARTER"**

3.1 College Green is high profile in nature, being directly visible from East Croydon Station, as Croydon's 'front door', and being next to major rail and road routes through Croydon. Two of Croydon's most important institutions, the Fairfield Halls and Croydon College are in the area as well as the open space of College Green and a number of significant development sites.

3.2 The area has an important role to play in regenerating the town centre and acting as the key cultural destination for the borough. Placing culture at the heart of the area along with new residential, retail and leisure activity will underpin the town centre's leisure and visitor economy and reinforce the area's heritage as the cultural heart of Croydon.

3.3 To realise this, it is proposed that College Green be the anchor site in the new "Cultural Quarter". This will join up a number of key stakeholders,

developments and activities in the town centre to form a significant destination for the borough with a coherent cultural offer. It will enhance the regeneration activities already taking place, improve accessibility to cultural and creative activity, and help transform the town centre into a vibrant and dynamic place which attracts visitors to the borough.

3.4 As outlined in the diagram below (diagram 1), the Cultural Quarter will form a cultural arc to the south of George Street and complement the retail and commercial offer around the Whitgift Centre/Centrale shopping centres and East Croydon station.

3.5 The Cultural Quarter encompasses parts of the Fair Field, Mid Croydon and Old Town areas and will run from East Croydon and include an enhanced College Green and Fairfield Halls and onto Queens Gardens. It will incorporate the Croydon Clocktower and Tech City offer, Surrey Street market and Exchange Square, with Mathews Yard and the pumping station, before reaching Croydon Minster.

**Diagram 1 - The Cultural Quarter**



3.6 The new offer will support the council's Growth Plan which sets out the principles by which Croydon will grow and a vision for Croydon that includes creating a place where residents from across the region come to visit Croydon attracted by Europe's largest retail and leisure centre, and this new Cultural Quarter.

3.7 The Fairfield Halls is a key part of the area and is central to this vision for the area. The aim is to 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.

3.8 To help meet the aspiration for the Cultural Quarter, the comprehensive development of College Green and the Fairfield Halls will deliver a vibrant cultural offer including:

- A destination including a rejuvenated and high quality Fairfield Halls which will be a key draw into the area
- Radical integration of the Fairfield Halls to College Green and the wider area, producing an access point on the Ashcroft side of the building. This would give a 'shop front' to College Green and supplement the existing entrance onto Park Lane.
- A hub for the key cultural providers in the borough with expanded provision for cultural and artistic performance space to encourage youth and stimulate creativity
- The provision of 400 - 500 residential units, retail, restaurants and community and business space to support and complement the cultural uses within the area
- Transformation and animation of the College Green space from a cul-de-sac to an area with high footfall with a new through route to and from East Croydon station and the town centre and other parts of borough

#### **4. FAIRFIELD HALLS MODERNISATION PROJECT**

4.1 A project to modernise the Fairfield Halls was proposed in 2011 and included in the council's capital programme following an options study delivered by Keith Williams Architects in 2010.

4.2 The mission statement for the project was to restore and upgrade Fairfield Halls as one of the country's leading modern, fit for purpose entertainments and cultural centres, appealing to a wide range of customers and active community participation whilst celebrating the history and being sympathetic to the architectural qualities of the existing halls.

4.3 Officers agreed to report back to Cabinet by September 2014 to agree how the project will be delivered and how it could be aligned with the wider College Green development.

#### **5. COLLEGE GREEN DEVELOPMENT**

5.1 In November 2013 the council commenced a developer selection competition using the London Developer Panel (LDP). A brief was sent to 25 companies on the LDP based on the master plan asking them to express and interest in the mixed use scheme for up to 600 residential units, community and business space, public space and the potential to include the Fairfield Halls modernisation project.

- 5.2 In March 2014, the College Green procurement was paused so as to review the wider requirements of the area in line with the council's emerging Growth Plan and ensure the council was satisfied with the proposal for a residential led scheme for the area. This includes a review of the timing, scope and procurement route for the development and the integration of the Fairfield Halls project, potentially by producing an access point on the Ashcroft side of the building. Further to this the council has aspirations to create a "Cultural Quarter" in the borough including the College Green area.
- 5.3 The majority of the College Green site is owned by the council and comprises open space, an underground car park beneath the open space and an adjacent multi-storey car park providing 1,300 spaces in total. The council also owns the freehold of the Fairfield Halls.
- 5.4 The other major landowner is Croydon College who own the college site and Barclay Road Annex which comprises a 75,000 sq. ft. educational building. It is currently vacant but previously used as an arts department. The college also own another site adjacent to the main building on College Road for which they have received planning consent for an education space and residential scheme. Following further consideration of the site a second planning application has been submitted for the development of a 31 and 15 storey residential and hotel building.
- 5.5 The Council is working with stakeholders including Croydon College regarding their plans and next steps for their building/site in the context of the new vision for the area to become a key element of the boroughs "Cultural Quarter."

## 6. THE NEW APPROACH TO DELIVERY

- 6.1 To realise the vision for College Green and the Cultural Quarter, a new approach is proposed for the delivery of the Fairfield Halls and College Green projects.
- 6.2 This will see a rejuvenated Fairfield Halls being delivered as part of an integrated project with the wider College Green development.
- 6.3 Further to this a number of early win projects are being delivered by the autumn 2014. These are a first step in contributing to the regeneration of the town centre through increasing audiences, users and spend by improving the Fairfield Halls programme and income levels ahead of the main development. This will contribute to a borough that people are proud to call home and that is accessible, inclusive and enjoyable. These improvements include:
1. **New Cinema and live screening offer** – Launch of a new cinema offer for up to 600 people with state of the art digital cinema equipment which will provide a regular season of blockbuster movies

and live streaming events such as the proms and royal opera house productions. This will bring to Croydon a new offer which will increase audiences and improve accessibility to productions such as the proms and opera to those who might not have otherwise experienced them. This will be officially opened at the end of September

2. **New Green Room entertainment space** – Creation of a new entertainment space in the Fairfield Halls which will host a regular comedy club, seasonal shows such as Christmas Santa shows, smaller music shows and parties and receptions. Plans are being developed to launch the room. This will increase audiences and enable FCL to encourage the use of the facility and range of arts programmes to those traditionally not associated with using cultural facilities. The first events will be launched at the end of September
3. **Rejuvenating the Arnhem Gallery** – Refurbishment of the gallery and improved sound separation from the rest of the building to enhance the space and enable FCL to compete with hotels for large scale commercial events such as conferences and exhibitions, one off events and regular music seasons aimed at younger people. This will increase and improve the experience for audiences and enable FCL to encourage the use of the facility to organisations who might not otherwise want to use the facility. This will be completed in October with a new season of events in the New Year.
4. **New Outdoor entertainment space** – Feasibility of creating of a new revitalised space, to replace the existing car park in front of the Fairfield Halls, which will become a destination as part of the wider Cultural Quarter where events and art installations will be held. This will increase awareness of the new Cultural Quarter and improve accessibility to the Fairfield Halls by providing an attractive outdoor space which is open to all.

6.4 These early win projects tangibly demonstrate the importance of cultural development in this area and will start to change the cultural offer in the area. They are also the first stage in delivering on the councils ambitions for rejuvenating the Fairfield Halls to deliver transformational change to the appearance and operation of the building to a fit for purpose 21<sup>st</sup> century performing arts centre.

6.5 Discussions will continue with key cultural stakeholders within the borough to be a part of the vision for College Green and the integrated project. This will potentially include a space on the site which they can use an art gallery and performance space as well as a safe and enjoyable space for young people to go to socialise and inspire creativity.

6.6 Whilst the council is undertaking these discussions the procurement and development route will be finalised to enable the council to go to the market in 2015. The specification for the comprehensive development will also be drafted to meet the vision for the College Green area including a rejuvenated Fairfield Halls.

6.7 This new delivery approach will enable some works to progress on the Fairfield Halls whilst progressing other elements of the wider Cultural Quarter development. The approach will also look at the wider Fair Field master plan area to ensure that opportunities for further integration or alignment of sites are considered. The overall approach will be flexible and seek to enable the redevelopment of the different component parts of Fairfield Halls in a timely fashion with clear timelines for when different elements of the work will take place over the next three years.

6.8 This report requests that Cabinet delegate authority to the Cabinet Member for Homes and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director for Development and Environment to progress the development, including the necessary approvals, of the integrated College Green and rejuvenated Fairfield Halls development in line with the vision set out in this report.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 The vision for the “Cultural Quarter” has been discussed with key cultural stakeholders. As the council’s main external cultural partner and provider, FCL has been an integral partner in the development of the Fairfield Halls proposals in order that these meet their business requirements and business plan.

7.2 Further consultation will take place as part of the development of the Cultural Quarter and the boroughs Growth Plan, with a comprehensive consultation being undertaken with both users and non-users to ensure the development is meeting the needs of communities in Croydon.

7.3 The Cultural Quarter is part of a wider conversation with residents and cultural groups in Croydon to shape the cultural offer in the borough. The first seminar “Ambitious for Croydon, Ambitious for Culture” was held on 8 July 2014 and further seminars will be held to boost the range and quality of cultural events in the borough.

7.4 Funding will be set aside from the project budget to engage communities on the development of the project. This will see a number of communication mechanisms to deliver messages to the community. This will include information on hoardings and exhibitions showcasing the works and progress as well as the story of the building from the opening in 1962.

7.5 A communications strategy is being developed for the project in partnership with FCL.



## 8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

### 8.1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

	Current Year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Revenue Budget (FFH)</b>	950	TBC	TBC	TBC
Expenditure				
Income				
<b>Effect of Decision</b>				
Expenditure				
Income				
<b>Remaining budget</b>				
<b>Capital Budget (FFH)</b>	2,124	8,197	11,315	11,904
Expenditure				
<b>Effect of Decision</b>				
Expenditure				
<b>Remaining Budget</b>				

### 8.2 The effect of the decision

- 8.2.1 The above table sets out the baseline position of a number of budget streams within the integrated College Green and Fairfield Halls project including:
- The Fairfield Halls Modernisation project capital budget - £33.75m
  - 2014/15 Revenue budget - £950k. This includes grant funding to FCL of £786k.
- 8.2.2 The early win projects set out within the report are being funded through the Fairfield Halls capital project and cost circa £349k. The costs include VAT as FCL are not VAT exempt. FCL will seek to minimise their liability by offsetting their input VAT.
- 8.2.3 As part of the next stage of development, costs associated with any land acquisition within the College Green area to deliver the scheme will be built into the development appraisal. The development is seen as an opportunity for the planned revolving investment fund, with a

payment from the capital programme required for the public facilities within the development.

### **8.3 Risks**

- 8.3.1 If the project does not proceed the building will continue to deteriorate and either the building will be forced to close or the Council will see a higher grant to cover the high maintenance/revenue costs to keep the building/business running.

### **8.4 Options**

- 8.4.1 The options are set out in section 15.

### **8.5 Future savings/efficiencies**

- 8.5.1 The new approach has the potential to reduce Fairfield Hall's dependency on the council revenue support. Any future decision on the scale of the scheme will have to be taken in the context of the choices required to deliver a balanced budget based on the known reduction in grant funding in 2015/16 and 2016/17 and also the additional funding that may be available to support this capital spend which may range from capital receipts (including the Riesco reserve) to relevant section 106 contributions.

- 8.6 Approved by: Richard Simpson, Director of Finance & Assets and S151 Officer

## **9. COMMENTS FROM THE COUNCIL SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER**

- 9.1 The Council Solicitor comments that legal advice will be provided throughout the course of this project as and when required and this will cover all relevant considerations, such as procurement and state aid issues if relevant, as well as advice on any proposed contractual making pertaining to specific decisions and on such matters as procurement and state aid.

- 9.2 Approved by: Sean Murphy, Principal Corporate Solicitor (Regeneration) on behalf of the Council Solicitor and Monitoring Officer

## **10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT**

- 10.1 There are no HR implications arising as a direct result.

- 10.2 Approved by Heather Daley, Director of Human Resources

## **11. EQUALITIES IMPACT**

- 11.1 An initial EqIA has been completed for the modernisation of the

Fairfield Halls. A full EqIA will be prepared as part of the development of the Cultural Quarter and will be monitored throughout the programme of works. The creation of the Cultural Quarter with a revitalised Fairfield Halls provides an excellent opportunity for the development of new activities and events which support community cohesion, bringing people together, attracting and involving new audiences.

- 11.2 The initial EqIA highlighted that Fairfield Halls are a part of the boroughs cultural infrastructure and without this remodelling the building will continue to deteriorate, putting the organisation at risk. This project could have a positive impact on young people, which accounts for a large proportion of Fairfield audiences, in allowing them to continue to access events and programmes.
- 11.3 The development will allow the Fairfield Halls to continue to operate whilst the main modernisation project is developed, and the Halls will continue to run programmes and hire to organisations and groups within the borough, which can benefit, BME groups, young people and older people.
- 11.4 As part of the modernisation project, a new Box Office and CRM system has been installed that will enable Fairfield Halls to capture demographic information so as to better target groups including young people and BME groups and encourage the widest use of the facilities and participation in arts, cultural and community activities.
- 11.5 Access Requirement; in addition to Equality Act 2010 requirements within the Building Regulations, this project should seek to improve accessibility which is currently achieved by a series of 'bolt on' and compromise measures. Improvements required include:
- i access through the main entrance from the car parking outside
  - ii step free access from the box office area to the grand foyer removing the need for the platform lift
  - iii repair, upgrade the lifts to conform to BS 8300 standards
  - iv more flexible seating in the theatres by introducing removable seats
  - v means of escape strategy for the evacuation of disabled people
  - vi way-finding, lighting and signing to consider the choice of colour & materials to assist the sensory impaired and those with learning disabilities

## **12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

12.1 The Fair Field master plan presents an excellent opportunity to create a truly integrated site-wide environmental strategy. The scale and mix of buildings allows centralised plant by linking complementary energy profiles. This project should be mindful of these wider aspirations as it offers potential for a wider energy strategy.

12.2 In terms of the Fairfield Halls, the building regulations will impact on the

performance of the environmental services and new & renovated thermally exposed fabric, as well as to structural alterations, changes in layout and construction that affect loading, fire safety and accessibility.

- 12.3 The projects within the development will aim to achieve reduction in CO2 emissions to the requirements of the building regulations. Improved thermal performance and connection to CHP heat (if viable) will go further in saving CO2 than renewables. Note that the improvements on thermal performance should be taken into account for the purpose of calculation.

### **13. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT**

- 13.1 There are no direct crime and disorder reduction impacts arising from the recommendations of this report.

### **14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION**

- 14.1 The recommendations within this report are seen as the best way to deliver a new Cultural Quarter for the borough and deliver a rejuvenated Fairfield Halls to deliver a building and operation that will bring real quality and lasting benefit to the borough over the next 50 years.
- 14.2 The preferred options will deliver a new Cultural Quarter which in turn places a modernised Fairfield Halls at the centre of it. This will reduce Fairfield Hall's dependency on the council revenue support, place culture and the Fairfield Halls at the heart of the continuing regeneration of Croydon and position FFH for the corporate market as well as the leisure market.

### **15. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 15.1 As recorded in section 4 above, the following options have been considered for the Project:
- 1 **Do nothing** – Cease the Fairfield Halls project and the College Green development and continue maintenance regime for the Halls to keep business going – This was rejected as it would lead to business closing through the high number of failures within the building and no refurbishment of modernisation to enable the business to continue.
  - 2 **Standalone Fairfield Halls and College Green developments** – The approach outlined in the November 2013 cabinet report to progress the modernised Fairfield Halls and the College Green development separately. This has been rejected to enable the Fairfield Halls to be better integrated into the College Green area and act as a focal point in a wider Cultural Quarter.
  - 3 **Include the Fairfield Halls project within the College Green development through the London Development Panel (LDP)** – A second approach outlined in the November 2013 cabinet report to progress the Fairfield Halls project within the LDP tender for the

College Green development. This has been rejected as the panel does not suit the new vision for the area as a Cultural Quarter.

- 4 **New integrated approach to delivery** – Progress the delivery of a new “Cultural Quarter” as outlined in section 6 of this report. This will enable a fully integrated approach to the development and expand the offer to a wider area.

15.2 This report seeks agreement to Option 4.

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**Background documents:** none