

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

21 NOVEMBER 2018

UPDATE ON SHERWOOD FOREST ART & CRAFT CENTRE CAPITAL SCHEME

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report is to update Members on the current Capital Scheme approved by Policy & Finance on 5 April 2018. The total capital expenditure proposed is £250k.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 The report to Policy & Finance Committee advised Members that Sherwood Forest Art & Craft Centre was opened in 1998 and was in need of significant updating.

2.2 This had become a priority following the decision to relocate the new Visitor Centre to a site immediately adjacent to the Art & Craft Centre which would bring an anticipated increase in footfall of visitors directly passing the entrance to SFACC of 455,000. This was on top of the existing 60,000 visitors (approx.) to the Centre

2.2 The new Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre has now been completed and is open to the public and there has been a substantial increase in customers to Sherwood Forest Art & Craft Centre.

3.0 Proposals

3.1 The capital scheme was envisaged to cover three main aspects as set out below:

3.1.1 Conversion of a former storage building at Forest Corner to provide a “gateway” building for the forest. Planning consent had already been granted but a number of minor amendments have been proposed which will allow the property to be used as either one large unit or two smaller ones. The necessary Environmental Surveys have been carried out and a European Protected Species Licence approved. Minor preparation works started in October with substantive work starting in November 2018.

3.1.2 New public toilets and provision of additional storage for the tenants - design drawings are at an advanced stage and a planning application is expected to be submitted by the end of November.

3.1.3 Realignment of rear entrance and creation of additional studio space - provisional design drawings have been completed and a number of amendments have been proposed. It is hoped that these will also be ready to submit for Planning Consent alongside those for the new toilets/storage.

4.0 Equalities Implications

4.1 There are only positive implications for taking forward the refurbishment of the Sherwood Forest Art and Craft Centre. The building is DDA compliant and provides opportunities for local businesses to showcase crafts and skills.

5.0 Financial Implications (18-19/9187)

5.1 A capital budget of £250,000 for the scheme was included in the Capital Programme for 2018/19 and is due be financed by existing Capital Receipts.

6.0 Comments of Director(s)

6.1 Policy & Finance Committee, at the meeting on 5 April 2018 approved a budget of £250.000 to carry out the improvements and refurbishment of the Sherwood Forest Art and Craft Centre. The financial calculations included in the Business Case considered by that Committee, based on the latest market rents achieved indicated that the Council would receive an approximate 7% return on its investment. This position has not changed and the work, as stated in this report, is now under way.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the report be noted and a further report be provided in January 2019

Reason for Recommendation

In order to keep Members appraised of the progress of the scheme

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Julie Reader-Sullivan on Ext 5258

Sanjiv Kohli
Deputy Chief Executive/Director - Resources