

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

19 JUNE 2019

NEWARK BEACON UPDATE

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the progress made at Newark Beacon.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 On 1 October 2018, the management of Newark Beacon was brought in-house and a five year Business Plan (2018–2023) was subsequently approved by the Economic Development Committee (21 November 2018)

3.0 Update

3.1 The Business Plan set out a number of proposals and objectives over a five year timeline. There have been some delays within this 5 year programme, primarily due to the need to undertake essential works and staffing changes. However, the overall budgetary position remains positive compared to forecast.

3.2 Staffing Changes

Currently both the Centre Manager and the Assistant Centre Manager are on 12 months maternity leave which commenced in March/April 2019. Additionally the Centre Support Assistant who manages Reception has been on long term sick leave since April, which has impacted on finding temporary cover and the time required to provide the necessary training. To provide cover a temporary Assistant Centre Manager is in place and a temporary placement Centre Manager will be commencing in June. This has not stopped implementation of some works with progress summarised in paragraph 3.3.

3.3 Essential Works

Having run the centre for a number of months it became clear that there were a range of essential works required to update and maintain the Beacon to a standard where it could continue to both retain existing businesses and attract new organisations. The following progress in respect of improvements to the Centre have been made:

Scheme	Status	Cost (approx.)
Legionella compliance	In progress	£6,000
Fire risk assessment compliance	In progress	£2,000
Fire alarm upgrade	Complete	£4,000
Telephone system upgrade	Complete	£4,000
Door access system replacement	Complete	£4,000
Kitchen equipment (café)	Complete	£2,500
Kitchen reorganisation (improved storage)	In progress	Nil
Redecoration (reception)	Complete	£1,200
Centre signage replacement	Complete	£4,000
Shared office/new meeting room (including new furniture & audio-visual equipment)	Complete	£20,000
Cafferata Suite redecoration	<i>Awaiting start date</i>	£1,000

Reception upgrade	In progress	£4,000
Kitchenette refurbishment (2)	<i>Awaiting quotation</i>	Approx. £2,000
Car park– remarking spaces & permit scheme	<i>Awaiting start date</i>	£1,000
Intruder alarm upgrade	Complete	£3,500
Communications room upgrade	Complete	£2,000
Future Projects – Provisional		
A Business Case will be undertaken for each project mentioned below to justify value for money		
Folding wall – Cafferata Suite & new audio-visual equipment	2020	£15,000 estimated
LED lighting (1.5 year payback)	2020	£12,000
Electric Car Charging points	2020	Package to be determined
Additional car parking (land purchase and build)	2020 – 21	£300,000 estimate
Solar Panels	2021	£100,000
Storage of the solar energy generated	2021	£50,000 estimate

4.0 **Performance to Date**

4.1 **Rental Surplus**

The 2018/19 Outturn shows the following: rental Income which includes rent, virtual and services charges was budgeted as £365,530. Actual achieved was £366,941 a favourable variance of £1,411.

4.2 **Auxiliary Surplus**

Auxiliary Income which includes catering, hot desking and hire charges was budgeted as £51,600. Actual achieved was £68,249 a favourable variance £16,649.

4.3 **Occupancy**

Occupancy in the six months since the Beacon management returned in-house has increased from 31 Offices Occupied (70%) to 34 of Offices Occupied (77%). This 7% increase in occupancy indicates that the Centre is on target to meet a proposed 85% occupancy by April 2020, as per the Business Plan.

4.4 **Business Support**

Business Support has increased from 2 businesses supported before October 2018 to 4 businesses supported in the six months since October 2018.

4.5 **Website Hits**

The number of website views increased by 737 views since October 2017. The Marketing Plan for the Beacon outlines how, over the next year, social media platforms such as LinkedIn, Twitter and the website will be used to increase the centre's profile.

Following the completion of the new meeting room and the remodelled shared office/hot desking suite, it is proposed to publicise these facilities in July's edition of the Voice Magazine as well as through various social media platforms. Media such as video clips will be exploited to broaden appeal and provide visually interesting news on social media.

4.6 Customer Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is an annual target. This will be measured in October 2019 to coincide with the anniversary of bringing the Centre management in house.

5.0 Equalities Implications

5.1 Equalities impact assessments will be completed as appropriate for the activities and actions mentioned within this report.

6.0 Financial Implications FIN19-20/6445

6.1 Business Cases will be provided at a later date for the further improvements outlined in paragraph 3.3 these will outline the detailed revenue and capital requirements. Budgetary provision for the staffing of the Beacon, in the current financial year, will also need to be revisited in light of long term sickness and maternity cover requirements.

7.0 Community Plan – Alignment to Objectives

7.1 The in-house management of Newark Beacon was driven by the desire improve the quality of the service and business support available to the customer, as well as reduce expenditure and increase revenue in accordance with Newark and Sherwood's Commercial Strategy and Investment Plan.

8.0 Comments of Director

8.1 I welcome the positive start made in achieving the Business Plan since the management of the Beacon was brought back in-house. I note staffing challenges and backfill has been required, which due to the work of those involved has ensured that the quality of offer or take-up has not declined. There remains much to do as part of the Business Plan and Marketing Strategy, matters I will be seeking regular assurance and updates on.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- A) Members note the report and congratulate staff on the achievements to date; and**
- B) a further progress report be provided to the Committee in June 2020.**

Reason for Recommendations

Ongoing reporting on the Business Plan

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Steven Syddall/David Best on ext. 5385

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