

Item 4

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET
29 SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF ARTS
DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Portfolio: Culture & Recreation

Feasibility Study, Arts Resource – Spennymoor Leisure Centre

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 As part of the process of managing the Borough's leisure centres in relation to both the Asset Management Plan and also providing leisure accommodation appropriate for future demands, members of Cabinet are aware of the medium term proposals for the redevelopment of Spennymoor Leisure Centre.
- 1.2 A feasibility study was commissioned in July 2005 undertaken by Arts UK to establish whether there is a need for an arts resource within the Borough and if there is how would such a facility be placed within the arts community and add value to existing leisure centre accommodation.
- 1.3 In August 2005 the feasibility study was completed and this report to Cabinet details its findings.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet note the findings of the feasibility study.
- 2.2 That more detailed work is commissioned which will serve as evidence for submission for possible external lottery funding.
- 2.3 That a sum of £15,000 be allocated from Borough Council contingencies to move the feasibility study onto the second stage of development.

3 DETAIL

- 3.1 The Borough Council have been engaged in the development of the arts for some considerable time working very closely with Arts Council of England in the strategic planning of Arts policy.
- 3.2 In 2003, the IDEA reported to the Borough Council the importance of placing arts at the strategic centre of the organisation and understanding the importance of the arts as a vehicle in cross-cutting areas of work which incidentally are now, in 2005, key priorities for the

Authority; namely equality and diversity, children and young people, improvements to the environment and the public realm, the health of the Borough's residents and so on. Examples of the way the arts are assisting in each of these priorities are well documented.

- 3.3 In 2004 an external arts audit was undertaken to identify gaps within the Borough in terms of facility provision, the distribution of the voluntary arts sector and practical opportunities for practising artists. These findings contributed to the feasibility study. The arts audit has led to the creation of an arts forum across the Borough which feeds into the Environment and Leisure Policy Group of the Local Strategic Partnership.
- 3.4 The Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 have recently completed a review of Arts Development and their findings and recommendations will be presented to Cabinet shortly.
- 3.5 Members of Cabinet are acutely aware of the need to sustain the viability of leisure facility stock and flexibility in accommodation is necessary in order to cater for the ever changing demands from the public. Consideration of the medium term proposals to alter facility accommodation at Spennymoor Leisure Centre has been part of an on-going process and it was obvious in 2004 that as a consequence of the development of the new gymnastics centre and extension of the fitness suite that accommodation at Spennymoor Leisure Centre needed to be critically analysed in light of the strategic arts documents referred to earlier.
- 3.6 In July 2005 Arts UK were commissioned with the financial support of the Arts Council of England to assess demand for an arts resource within the Borough.
- 3.7 The report which is available for inspection has a number of key findings.
 - There is evidence that local people are supportive of and want an Arts Resource.
 - There is a high level of voluntary/community resources in the Borough however, they do not provide a year round programme, have little opportunity to bring professional artists/companies into the programme and for some facilities are heavily effected by the school timetable such as exams and holidays.
 - Spennymoor Leisure Centre has already been highlighted as a valuable resource for arts activity in the Borough as many large-scale events, performances, concerts and workshops take place in this venue.

- Having an existing building which can be converted at reasonable cost is a considerable advantage and probably unrepeatable
- A number of local arts groups and organisations would base themselves at the Arts Resource
- The lack of professional facilities and resources in Sedgefield Borough would be met by an Arts Resource
- The Arts Resource would have a key role in developing local people's skills and levels of attainment through education and outreach work.
- The Arts Resource should not rely on ticket and other trading income but should offer participatory, education, arts development and training as its main thrust.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The areas identified within Spennymoor Leisure Centre which could be developed into an arts resource and are shown on the attached plans will in the very near future require investment as part of the Councils' Asset Management Plan.
- 4.2 Members are already aware of the need to invest in the existing public bar area, the concourse area, other meeting and activity rooms and the Capricorn Ballroom.
- 4.3 In order to give a sense of direction and status to this investment plan, the proposed investment geared to an arts resource would establish a broader customer base at Spennymoor Leisure Centre and create accommodation which is more in keeping with a hugely demanding public.

Capital Resources

- 4.4 The feasibility study identifies 3 costed options for investing in an arts resource which range from £155,000 to £800,000. Details of the scope of the work can be found at appendix 1.
- 4.5 An arts resource the like of which is indicated in their feasibility study would require external arts lottery and other similar funding to be secured. Although there would be the need for the Borough Council to invest Capital resources in the project, the majority of funding should come from other sources.

Revenue Implications

- 4.6 The need to limit revenue costs associated with capital projects is the principle being followed across all Council portfolios.

The delivery of an arts resource at Spennymoor Leisure Centre must not lead to an increase in the operating costs of these areas and this steer should be given to the authors of a stage 2 feasibility study.

- 4.7 In order to establish more detail with regard to costs, design issues, mechanical and electrical considerations, structural issues and definitive resource implications, a second stage study is required.
- 4.8 It is anticipated that costs to move this agenda forward would be in the region of £20,000 but this work is required before any arts lottery application can be submitted. Partnership funding to the value of £5,000 may be available, leaving a sum of approximately £15,000 to be allocated by the Borough Council which would be met from contingencies.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Anchored within the feasibility study was extensive public consultation. The authors consulted with over 250 groups, organisations and individuals in Sedgefield Borough and elsewhere both regionally and nationally. Information was gathered from face-to-face interviews, telephone interviews, public meetings, desk research and a questionnaire. The response to the study on behalf of residents of the Borough was extremely robust with organisations, groups and individuals representing over 36,000 people.

6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The findings of the feasibility study do not point the Borough Council in the direction of creating an arts centre reliant upon ticket sales. The key findings from the public consultation was to provide an arts resource capable of linking with other external activity and develop a local network between amateur and professional artists, community groups and young people.
- 6.2 An arts resource developed at Spennymoor Leisure Centre must position itself within the arts agenda for the Borough to complement existing voluntary programmes and other small scale accommodation¹ to maximise the benefits of opportunities for residents to be engaged in different art forms.
- 6.3 Many artists were interviewed in the feasibility study. The findings indicated that artists were very interested in being a part of the art resource as there is a serious lack of artist's studios in the North East. Artists indicated that they wished to offer workshops/performances in

¹Sedgefield Community College (drama studio), Greenfield Art and Community College (drama studio and gallery), Mordon Village Hall (performance space), Shildon Civic Hall (stage)

return for accommodation. Artists would provide delivery for the arts resource education programme internally or through outreach sessions. The true costs of the artist's time would enable a healthy programme to take place immediately. It is important to highlight that artists who are interested in studio space in the arts resource are looking for space where groups can come and interact in functional well equipped rooms so classes, education workshops can take place. Key artists that have highlighted interest have been from digital artists, music artists and visual/performance companies.

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Ward(s)

Key Decision Validation:
 Affecting two or more wards
 Expenditure over £100,000

Background Papers
 IDEA Report (2003)
 Arts Audit (2004)
 Spennymoor Arts Resource Feasibility Study by Arts UK, July 2005

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Option A: Full Refurbishment and conversion

Includes full strip out of all existing fitting and finishes and strip out of Mechanical and electrical alterations to building interior to form new spaces as required and a fit out of all finishes. Mechanical and electrical services will be renewed and connected to existing plant. The building will be re-branded to the front elevation including limited external works

£814,500

Option B: Medium level Refurbishment and conversion

Includes removal of existing unwanted fit out items and making good of minor modifications to internal room layout.

£300,500

Option C: Basic redecoration

Includes essential maintenance repair work carried out as per the property survey report and an allowance for a general redecoration of all decorated surfaces.

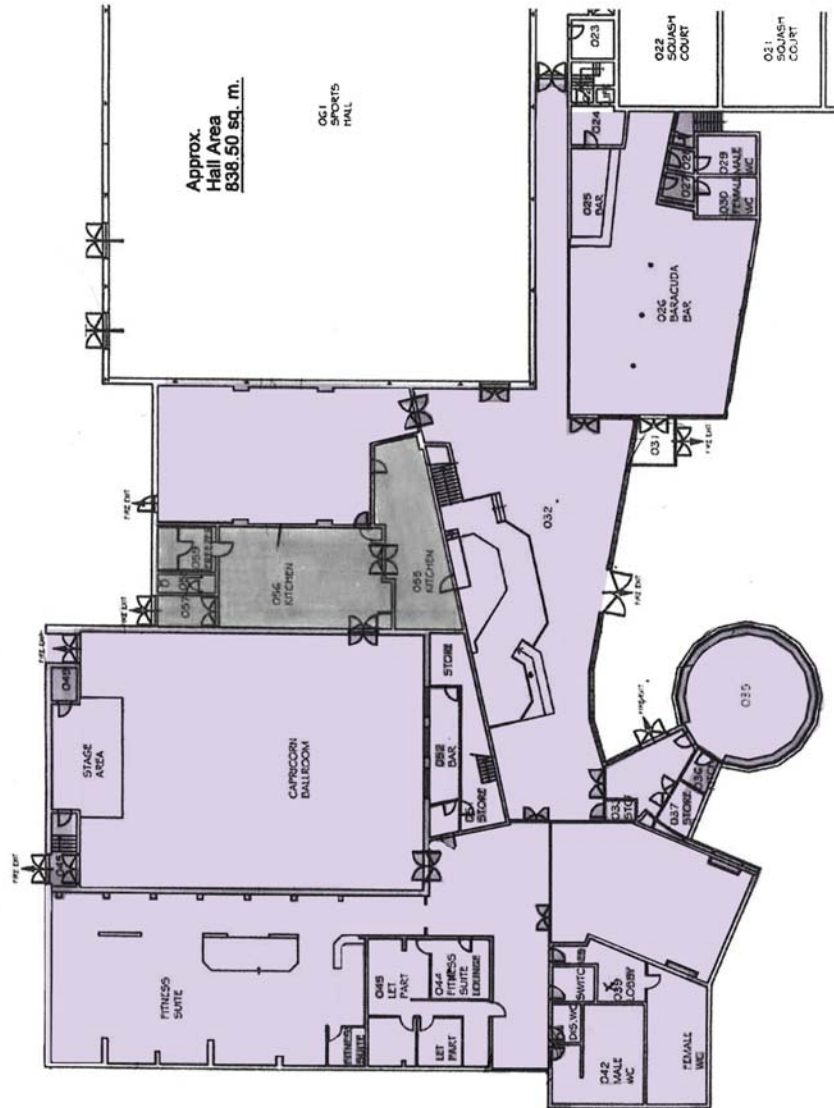
£155,000

Further Works (over and above A-C)

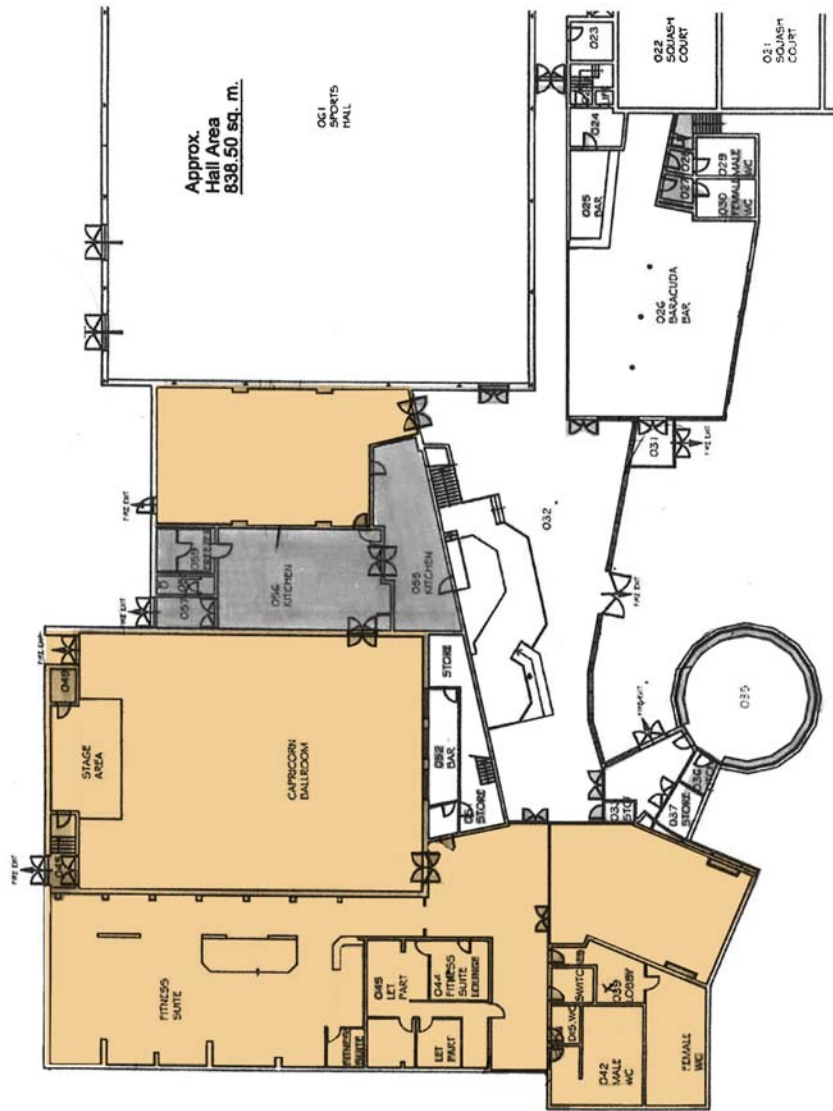
Upgrade current main entrance and corridor	£11,000.00
2 No. external canopies to the courtyard	£16,000.00
Entrance feature/sculpture	£15,000.00
New curtain walling to façade	£76,000.00
New delivery entrance doors and road alterations/layby	£40,000.00
Air conditioning to Fitness Suite, Ballroom and Bar	£60,000.00
Air conditioning to Sports Hall	£80,000.00
(over and above renewal of M&E services – Option A)	
Acoustic baffles/treatments (1,000sqm)	

Exclusions

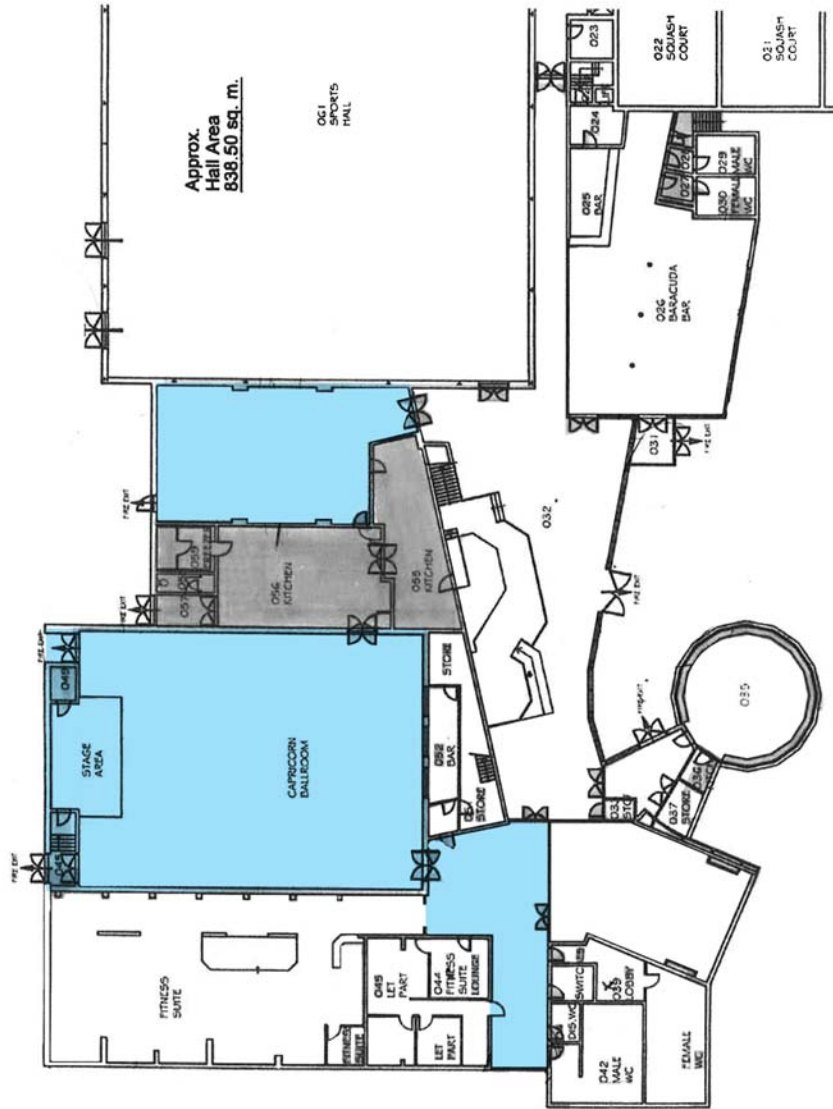
Value Added Tax
 Professional fees and planning and building regulation fees
 Upgrade/modifications to utility supplies
 Data/telephone equipment and installation
 CCTV installation
 Asbestos removal if applicable
 Loose furniture and fittings



Cost Option A – Full Refurbishment and Conversion



Cost Option B – Medium Level Refurbishment and Conversion



Cost Option C – Basic Redecoration

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