

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL – PROPOSED RECORD OF DECISION

### DECISION TO BE TAKEN BY:

Cabinet Member for Community Services

### DECISION NO:

15/00056

### For publication

### Subject: Tunbridge Wells Cultural Hub

#### Decision:

The Growth, Economic Development and Communities Cabinet Committee is asked to consider and endorse and recommend to the Cabinet Member for Community Services to agree to:

a) enter into legal agreements including, but not limited to, a Memorandum of Understanding with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The Memorandum of Understanding sets out the intention with which KCC will progress with the project and has had input from all relevant directors including the Director for Infrastructure.

b) support the delivery of the Cultural Hub by agreeing to temporarily relocate the library and adult education service during the period of the works followed by incorporating them within the new Cultural Hub facility.

c) permit the project subject to KCC's VAT partial liability exemption position not being breached or in breach.

#### Reason(s) for decision:

Legal agreements and expenditure in excess of £1M

#### Cabinet Committee recommendations and other consultation:

#### Any alternatives considered:

The project has been a long term aspiration spanning several decades. Other options considered were:

**Option 1: Do nothing** – the current facilities are extremely dilapidated and KCC would need to find the funds to undertake the necessary works. In order to make revenue savings, services would potentially need to consider what elements were discontinued or look at re-locating. Tunbridge Wells would get no enhanced cultural offer and no funding would be levered in to the county from HLF or Arts Council grants.

**Option 2: KCC keep the freehold** – KCC would need to find c£4M to invest in the scheme and it is unlikely that TWBC would then invest and or take as large an area within the revitalised facility. This would leave KCC with potentially higher revenue costs and KCC would carry the full risk of the project.

**Option 3: Dispose of facilities** – KCC could dispose of the facilities on the open market and look to purchase other alternative facilities. The cost of this option is likely to be prohibitive and would be subject to finding suitable alternative locations. Services would be less likely to deliver savings through integration and Tunbridge Wells would get no enhanced cultural offer. Once again funding would be unlikely to be levered in to the county from external grants.

**Any interest declared when the decision was taken and any dispensation granted by the Proper Officer:**

None

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signed

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date

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