

5. MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY – BUILDING CHANGES

Recommendation

- 1. The Museums General Manager recommends that the report on the forthcoming changes to the Museum and Art Gallery building be noted.**

Background Information

2. The Joint Committee received a report in June on a feasibility study for a Children's Museum on the ground floor at Foregate Street, produced by consultants DCA and funded by the Arts Council. (Minute no. 182 refers) The Children's Museum was agreed as the preferred approach for future development of the building and to deliver a permanent, financially viable solution for the service.
3. Following the referral of the report to the City as the building's owners, the City Council's Cabinet resolved on the 29 July to approve an alternative recommendation for its staff to move into the ground floor following the sale of Orchard House.
4. Worcester City Council's Cabinet has requested that the Museums Joint Committee considers alternative options for utilisation of the ground floor of the Museum and Art Gallery for the delivery of the Transformation Plan. Savings for the 2015-16 financial year have been identified through work on the Hartlebury project but the Joint Committee will need to review potential savings for 2016-17 in due course and this will be the subject of a future report.
5. At its last meeting the Joint Committee requested a report back on proposals for the ground floor.
6. Considerable discussion and joint planning has taken place to address the issues arising from the move since the last meeting. The challenge during the construction phase is to continue to operate as a public building, with a commitment to the existing advertised programme which includes important commemorative events as part of the HLF funded Worcestershire World 100 project. In addition, the works on the ground floor require access to the basement where collections are stored, requiring additional supervision from the museum team during certain weeks of the contract to protect collections.
7. Advice has been sought from the National Security Advisor to make sure all changes to the building and its procedures do not jeopardise the Art Gallery's Government

Indemnity status. This in turn allows for the loan of works from the national collections, the only space in the whole County which can receive such collections and display them to the public.

8. The main accommodation changes are:

- Museum staff to vacate offices and a workshop on the ground floor
- The creation of a new office on the first floor as part of the contract
- The surrender of the museum committee room on the ground floor as a public space available for lettings – this will now become the main meeting room for the building
- Creation of new offices, toilets and a kitchen on the ground floor for City Council staff.

9. The shop and café will continue to occupy the entrance and foyer. The impact on both and on the general operation of the building during the course of the contract will be minimised as far as possible but there will inevitably be some unavoidable disruption during the building work.

10. The City Council's offices require more extended opening hours and work is in progress to find the best solution to key holding and security matters. A review of facilities management contracts is also underway to avoid any duplication once the offices are ready for opening.

11. The first moves of City Council staff into the new location will take place in February 2015. A further progress report will be provided to the Joint Committee at that point.

Supporting Information

None

Contact Points

Specific Contact Point for this report:

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Background Papers

In the opinion of the Museums General Manager there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.