

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 15 June 2017

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community & Sport

SUBJECT: Extension of Brindley Café

WARD(S) Mersey

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider a proposal for the extension of the Brindley Theatre café, in order to provide improved facilities for customers and opportunities to generate additional income.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the proposal for the extension of the Brindley Theatre café facility, as outlined in the report and appendices, be approved; and**
- 2) Council be asked to include £80,000 within the 2017/18 Capital Programme for this scheme, to be funded as outlined in paragraph 5.1.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Brindley Theatre opened in September 2004. Since then visitor numbers have increased. In the last 5 years that increase has accelerated and the Brindley Theatre in 2016 sold 85,985 tickets. Many people also visit The Brindley Theatre without buying tickets for the sole purpose of visiting the café.

3.2 Currently the café is able to seat 40 people. It has remained unaltered since the Brindley opened in 2004. At peak times all of the seats become occupied very quickly and many potential customers leave without purchasing any food or beverages. This represents a loss of income for the Council. When popular sell out shows are on the facility is unable to meet all of the demand, which further reduces the income generation opportunities.

3.3 By extending the café as suggested in appendix 1 and 2 seating space for 80 would be created. This doubles the current seating provision. This would allow more produce to be sold thereby

increasing the profitability of the café. A better food offer could be provided. This could include pre-theatre meals which the current facilities are unable to offer due to space constraints.

3.4 The works will include the construction of a single storey extension under a single-ply membrane flat roof and parapet detail to keep in appearance with the existing building. The extension would provide approximately an additional 35m² of seating space.

3.5 Locating the extension to the rear elevation of the venue is considered the most suitable location as it would allow the existing facilities to be extended without relocation. This would prevent the need for any major alteration works to other areas of the venue. The existing floor mounted fin heating coils would be relocated to the new curtain walling position and the floor infilled.

3.6 Additionally, a new door will be installed in the rear wall of the converted office/new kitchen storage room to allow access into the stage void adjacent to the room for emergency purposes. Mechanical ventilation via an extract fan system will be installed to the existing window within the converted kitchen store room to provide the required ventilation.

3.7 Aesthetically, the proposed location would have minimal impact on the appearance of the venue as it would not be visible from the surrounding street/road. The extension would be sympathetic to the buildings original design both internally and externally. The location of the extension would also allow construction with minimal disruption/interruption to the daily activities of the venue.

3.8 The proposed extension of the Brindley Theatre café would therefore provide much needed additional facilities for customers. It is also anticipated that this would generate additional income for the Council, over and above any additional running costs and capital financing costs.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The estimated capital cost of carrying out the proposed works is £80,000 to be funded from external borrowing. The annual financing costs associated with this are approximately £5,500 and will be financed through the additional net income which the increased capacity will generate.

5.2 The café in its current form currently generates income of approximately £100,000 per year which generates a small profit.

The extension of the facility will improve the scope for profitability as the fixed costs of the café facility will be spread across an increased number of customers.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Provision for children of all ages, including very young children, would be made within the enlarged and refurbished facility.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

By increasing the capacity of the café more products will be sold and it is likely that additional staff would have to be employed.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The enlarged and refurbished café would offer a range of healthy food options.

6.4 A Safer Halton

There are no Safer Halton implications.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

By creating more seating space at The Brindley café more people would be encouraged to visit the facility. That in turn leads to increased footfall within the Runcorn Old Town centre.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to carry out the proposed works will mean that the café's profitability would remain as it is and may even decline. It is essential that all income generation opportunities are maximised.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The facilities will be accessible by all members of the community.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.