

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills, and
Community Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 18 November 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Director Community & Greenspace

PORTFOLIO: Employment, Learning and Skills and
Community

SUBJECT: The Brindley Enhancement Project

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 A presentation will be provided on the Brindley Enhancement project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

The presentation is welcomed by the Board.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Brindley Enhancement project forms part of the Town Deal Fund - Reconnecting Runcorn programme. This transformational project will not only act as a catalyst for the Reconnecting Runcorn programme, it will also transform the Brindley into a cultural hub for the borough, providing a new space for Runcorn Library, a larger café / bistro offer and a high quality outdoor green space.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The grant provided from the Town Deal Fund must be drawn down by 31 March 2026.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

The venue is a social gathering place and can help reduce loneliness. It also has free to use spaces; the gallery and café area, with free Wi-Fi and as it becomes home to the Runcorn Old Town

Library and a larger café/ restaurant area the opportunities for local people will increase and include free PC access.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

The Brindley supports from an employment learning and skills perspective as it is a key employer in the town with over one hundred staff, largely made up of casual staff with flexible hours. Increased staff will be required for the Cultural Hub.

The theatre is an important selling point when attracting inward investors and businesses to the borough. The Brindley is the key flagship project within the Reconnecting Runcorn programme.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The Brindley programme will continue to provide ample opportunities for children and young people to come and watch performances. In addition there are numerous opportunities to be involved in performances, which can improve confidence and raise self-esteem. There are over 100 dance schools who regularly use the Brindley for rehearsals and shows. In addition, the Halton Primary Arts Network schools regularly use the performance space. The library service provides excellent opportunities and engagement activities for children and young people for rhyme time to science clubs. The green outdoor space will also open up opportunities for outdoor activities.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The venue is also a social gathering place and can help reduce loneliness. It also has free to use spaces; the gallery and café area, with free wi-fi and as it becomes home to the Runcorn Old Town library and a larger café/ restaurant area the opportunities for local people will increase and include free PC access.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The Brindley extension project is including significant climate supporting measures. These were reported to Executive Board on 20 April 2023 (EXB111).

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

Advice has been taken from Cheshire Police Counter Terrorism Unit for the existing Brindley and the extension, to promote a safe venue for customers and staff and measures have been implemented in advance of the Protect Duty.

The Brindley provides a high quality key asset for the Boroughs residents. Impacts range from accessing the building and its services to stimulating and growing interests in theatre, culture, arts and creativity.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The enhancement project is being closely monitored by cost consultants and the Council's Client and Project Manager. The greatest risk is failure to draw down the Town Deal Fund grant in deal, however, we are confident this can be achieved.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The Brindley Theatre is open and fully accessible. As part of the new extensions a Changing Places facility will be installed which will not only serve the Brindley, the wider town centre.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There are no direct climate change implications as part of this report. However, the Brindley extension project is including significant climate supporting measures. These were reported to Executive Board on 20 April 2023 (EXB111).

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

- 10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.