

Committees	Dated:
Community and Children's Services – For Information Culture, Heritage and Libraries – For Information	12/10/2018 22/10/2018
Subject: Artizan Street Library and Community Centre flood damage and building work update	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services	For Information
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Summary

On Monday 29 January 2018, Artizan Street Library and Community Centre staff discovered significant water damage to the building caused by an overflowing hand basin in the first-floor toilets. Vandalism was suspected, and the incident was immediately reported to the police. The ground floor Multi Hall sustained the worst of the damage and the ceiling, walls and floor need repair. Additionally, the fire alarm was damaged, and the DVD loan stock destroyed. Loss adjusters were appointed and compensation for loss of income from room hire (£4,150 per quarter) and replacement of the water damaged DVD stock (£1,500) was approved.

The remedial work is now underway and has been combined with reconfiguration of space to provide a ground floor Housing Office. The current date for completion of the building work is 19 October 2019.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

- Note the report.

Main Report

Background

1. Artizan Street Library and Community Centre opened in December 2012. It was a new service for the City of London, with five hireable rooms, a library and a range of frontline housing services delivered by one staff team.
2. The rooms are available for private hire, both within and outside of opening hours, subject to the agreement of the conditions of hire.
3. The business model has been successful and, from April 2017 to date, income from the multi-hall totalled £19, 524 – 35% of the total income from room hire at Artizan Street (£56,018).

4. On Monday 29 January, staff discovered that a first-floor hand basin had been stuffed with paper towels and polythene and the taps left to run. We believe this happened on the previous Friday evening, when the centre was being used by one of the City of London's commissioned services. The area below, including the multi-hall, sustained substantial water damage, including to the sprung floor, wall and ceiling decoration and the library's DVD loan collection. The fire alarm was also affected but was very quickly repaired.
5. Staff called the police and an investigation took place. However, with no CCTV evidence, the police reported that they were unable to progress investigations.
6. The incident was also reported to the City of London's loss adjusters. Our insurers agreed to cover all damage to the Artizan Street Library and Community Centre building, the loss of library DVD stock and the loss of income from hire of the Multi Hall.
7. Hirers of the Multi Hall were informed that it would be unavailable. Wherever possible, alternative provision (the Community Hall on the first floor or the Portsoken Health and Community Centre hall) was offered as an alternative. St Botolph's Without Aldgate church also offered space to some of groups that cannot be rehoused within the two City of London buildings.
8. To minimise disruption to the public, it was decided that remedial work should coincide with planned reorganisation of space to move the Housing Office to the ground floor. This change was requested by Middlesex Street Estate residents.

Current Position

9. Building work commenced in early September and is projected to be completed on 19 October 2018. The first-floor hand basin taps have already been replaced with push taps to minimise the risk of any future vandalism.
10. Along with the repairs to the Multi Hall, the following space changes are being made:
 - The Housing Office is moving to the ground floor from the first floor. To accommodate this, the current Interview Room, Treatment Room and small kitchen are being combined to provide one space for the new office.
 - The Treatment Room is being relocated to the first floor.
 - A new office for the Centre Manager is being created within the current first-floor workroom in the space vacated by Housing Office staff.
 - An internal window is to be installed in the workroom to improve natural lighting via borrowed light from the first-floor skylight.
11. The Centre will remain open during most of the building work. A short period of closure will be necessary towards the end of the project. This is currently anticipated to be 28 September 2018 to 2 October 2018. Library customers and hirers have been informed.

12. During the building work, the Housing Office has temporarily relocated to the Portsoken Health and Community Centre.
13. Compensation for loss of the library's DVD stock has been agreed to the value of £1,500.
14. To date, claims for loss of hall hire income for quarters one and two have been submitted to the value of £4,300. Another claim for loss of income in quarter three is due to be submitted.

Corporate & Strategic Implications

15. The current building work will ensure that the Centre can offer the popular Multi Hall space for hire. The reconfiguration of internal space will make the Housing Office staff more accessible to residents.

The work supports Corporate Plan Objective 4: Communities are cohesive and have the facilities they need:

- Support access to suitable community facilities, work spaces and visitor accommodation.

The work is in line with the Community and Children's Services Business Plan:

- Priority Three – Independence, Involvement and Choice:
 - People of all ages can live independently, play a role in their communities and exercise choice over their services.
- Priority Five – Community:
 - People of all ages feel part of, engaged with and able to shape their community.

Implications

16. The total cost for all the building work is in the region of £140,000. Our insurance cover is comprehensive and sufficient to cover the damage sustained, the loss of stock and the loss of income. A successful bid for Community Infrastructure Levy funding has been granted and will cover any excess.

Conclusion

17. Building work is underway to repair flood damage to the building and reconfigure space to allow the movement of the Housing Office to the ground floor of Artizan Street Library and Community Centre. It is due to be completed on 19 October 2018. Loss adjusters have agreed claims for the flood damage, the replacement of library stock and compensation for hall hire income.

Appendices

- None

Background Papers

- Flood at Artizan Street Library and Community Centre Committee report
- Culture, Heritage and Libraries – (For information) 05/03/2018
- Community and Children's Services – (For information) 07/03/2018

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