

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Policy and Resources Committee Finance Committee Property Investment Board – For Information	6 July 2017 Urgency 19 July 2017
<b>Subject:</b> Beech Street Property Uses – update report	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> City Surveyor and Headmistress of the City of London School for Girls	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Paul Wilkinson & Ena Harrop	

### Summary

In March 2017, your committee considered a report of the Town Clerk, City Surveyor & Managing Director, Barbican Centre setting out the strategic importance of Beech Street to the Cultural Hub. The Report asked Members to:-

- Agree in principal the use of Exhibition Halls 1 and 2 for cultural and retail use which would align with the City's adopted policies and strategies for the Cultural Hub;
- Agree that the final decision on occupiers of the Exhibition Halls would be taken by the Policy and Resources Committee (in consultation with the Barbican Centre Board, the Cultural Hub Working Party and the Property Investment Board and Corporate Asset Sub Committee); and
- Agree that Policy and Resources Committee become the spending committee to maintain an overview of the Beech Street Programme and ensure different strands deliver against the ambitions for a Cultural Hub.

Recommendations 2 and 3 above were approved by the committee however a decision on recommendation 1 was deferred pending a joint report of the City Surveyor and the Headmistress of the City of London School for Girls. The committee requested that the report address:-

- The CLSG ambitions for expansion of their Prep. Department
- Possible alternative sites for its location inc. Beech Street; and
- An assessment of the overall impact on the Cultural Hub.

Significant progress in addressing these issues has been made, and a greater understanding of the issues has been achieved. However, following a meeting between the Barbican Centre, CLSG, City Surveyor and Town Clerk, it is recommended that further studies to provide the required evidence base are needed before any further consideration is given to the future proposals and occupancy of Exhibition Hall 2. This work is likely to take until the end of the 2017 and require additional resources.

This report provides a brief update of the latest position and sets out a request for additional funding to explore options for the School and Cultural Hub in more detail.

## **Recommendation(s)**

For Policy and Resources Committee: -

- Note the current position; and
- Note that a Gateway 3 project report requesting funding to progress the transformation of Beech Street will be brought forward at the earliest opportunity, using urgency procedures if required to ensure consideration of Exhibition Hall 2 occupancy doesn't delay the wider project.

For Finance Committee: -

- Approve up to £50k from the Finance Committee City's Cash contingency, to allow the City of London School for Girls to explore the options identified, including Exhibition Hall 2, in greater detail; and
- Approve up to £50k from the Finance Committee City Fund contingency, to enable the Barbican Centre on behalf of the Cultural Hub to explore in greater detail the potential use of Exhibition Hall 2 to align with aims and objectives of the Cultural Hub.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. In March 2017, your committee considered a report on the potential use of Exhibition Halls 1 and 2 for cultural and retail uses as part of the City of London Corporation's plan to create a cultural hub in the North West of the Square Mile. The Cultural Hub Working Party subsequently endorsed this approach to the use of Exhibition Halls 1 and 2.
2. A Member stated that whilst he supported the development of a cultural hub, the CLSG had ambitions to grow its' Preparatory School Department and that Exhibition Hall 2 was the only viable option into which it could expand. A detailed discussion followed with views expressed in support of both strategic priorities – Education and Culture - and the Committee decided to defer a decision until the question of the CLSG expansion needs, including alternative sites and its impact on the cultural hub, had been addressed.

### **Current Position**

3. Since your committee meeting in March, the CLSG and the City Surveyor have been working closely to evaluate a number of potential options for the School's expansion, with the input of Nicholas Hare Architects.
4. Preliminary work was also carried out on a potential use of Exhibition Hall 2 to align with the aims and objectives of the Cultural Hub, as envisaged in the Beech

Street Feasibility Study. This was carried out to inform Members request regarding the potential impact on the Hub of the School utilising the Exhibition Hall.

5. Following the initial work exploring the School's options a meeting took place between the Barbican Centre, City of London School for Girls, City Surveyor and Town Clerk. At that meeting it was acknowledged that whilst significant progress had been made into addressing Members concerns, further studies would be needed before further consideration to the future uses of Exhibition Hall 2 could be given. Those further studies would include business cases for the School and Cultural Hub options to provide a robust evidence base, within the framework of agreed Corporation policies and strategies regarding education and culture.

### **Proposals**

6. It is proposed that the Finance Committee release up to £50k from their City's Cash contingency to enable the School to explore in greater detail the potential options identified for their Preparatory Department expansion, including Exhibition Hall 2.
7. It is further proposed that the Finance Committee release up to £50k from the City Fund contingency to enable the Cultural Hub to explore potential occupancy models for Exhibition Hall 2 in greater detail.
8. A further meeting between Barbican Centre, City of London School for Girls, City Surveyor and Town Clerk will take place following the summer recess and the results of both exercises would be reported to Members no later than December 2017.
9. It is also proposed that the findings of the Beech Street Feasibility Study, carried out in 2016, be taken forward via a Gateway 3 report at the earliest possible opportunity. This will enable the overall transformation of the street, in particular the lighting, highway and public realm, to continue without delay. This is particularly important as the necessary traffic modelling studies are likely to take at least 12 months to complete.

### **Financial Implications**

10. The additional works will be funded from Finance Committee contingency, subject to their agreement. The funds will need to be drawn from the City's Cash contingency for the School and City Fund contingency for the Barbican Centre.

### **Conclusion**

11. In March 2017, Members deferred in-principle approval of the use of Barbican Exhibition Halls for cultural and retail use pending further information detailing how the CLSG expansion ambitions could be addressed. A number of options have now been identified for the CLSG expansion around their existing campus, in addition to any options utilising Exhibition Hall 2. These options require additional work before any decision can be taken on the future occupancy of Exhibition Hall 2. The proposals set out within this report would enable the School and Cultural Hub to explore their respective options and avoid further delay with the overall transformation of Beech Street.

## **Background Papers**

Beech Street – property usage Report – Policy & Resources Committee, March 2017

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