

<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
Finance Committee	<b>25 July 2017</b>
<b>Subject:</b> Decisions taken under Delegated Authority or Urgency since the last meeting of the Committee	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Town Clerk	<b>For Information</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Julie Mayer, Town Clerk's Department	

### **Summary**

This report advises Members of action taken by the Town Clerk since the last meeting of the Committee, in consultation with the Chairman and Deputy Chairman, in accordance with Standing Order No. 41(a). The actions was:

Beech Street Property Uses – request for additional funding to explore options for the School and Cultural Hub in more detail.

### **Reason for urgency**

To avoid any further delay to the Transformation of Beech Street project, a resolution to the future occupancy of Exhibition Hall 2 was required as soon as possible. Any delay would have led to increased cost and could have led to reputational damage for the City of London Corporation, given the public expectations around the project. Architects for the School had been engaged and, once approval had been given, works could continue without delay.

### **Recommendation**

(i) 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

(ii) 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**

**Beech Street Property Uses – request for additional funding to explore options for the School and Cultural Hub in more detail.**

### **Background**

In March 2017, the Policy & Resources 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:-

- (i) 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;

- (ii) 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
- (iii) Agree that Policy and Resources Committee becomes 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 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 including Beech Street; and an assessment of the overall impact on the Cultural Hub.

### **Current Position**

Significant progress in addressing the above 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, the Policy and Resources Committee (6<sup>th</sup> July 2017) has agreed 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 will require additional resources.

The accompanying 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.**

The following recommendations were approved by the Policy & Resources Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017:-

- (i) note the current position; and
- (ii) 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.

### **Proposal**

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.

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.

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.

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**

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.

### **Action Taken**

(i) up to £50k was approved 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

(ii) up to £50k was approved from the Finance Committee City Fund contingency, to enable the Barbican Centre, on behalf of the Cultural Hub, to explore the potential use of Exhibition Hall 2 in greater detail, to align with aims and objectives of the Cultural Hub.

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