

Arun District Council

REPORT TO:	Economy Committee 16/04/24
SUBJECT:	Former Brewers Fayre Feasibility Study
LEAD OFFICER:	Neil Taylor, regeneration Lead & Karl Roberts, Interim CEO & Director of Growth
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Roger Nash, Chair of Economy Committee
WARDS:	Hotham / Marine
CORPORATE PRIORITY / POLICY CONTEXT / CORPORATE VISION: Bringing unused buildings back into beneficial use and promoting community wellbeing.	
DIRECTORATE POLICY CONTEXT: The Council has a responsibility to bring forward regeneration activity across the district where possible. Bringing the former Brewers Fayre pub back into use as an indoor community and visitor venue will provide a public event venue for larger events and an activity space for visitor during unfavourable weather. Promoting community cohesion and involvement together with an improvement in the Bognor Regis tourism offer.	
FINANCIAL SUMMARY: The feasibility estimate accompanying this report has been prepared by Ridge Consultancy to provide assistance with decision making and budget setting.	

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide feasibility information to Members in respect of the conversion of the former Brewers Fayre pub into a multi-use public venue. The building was used as the 'Royal Hall' prior to it being let to Whitbread in 1996, who then converted the building into its present form. The building has been vacant since Whitbread vacated in May 2023.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- a. The Economy Committee notes the content of the feasibility report.
- b. The Economy Committee requests officers to prepare a report on the cost of preparing a draft full business case (including sources of funding) for a multi-use facility including consideration of additional income opportunities related to Option 3a.
- c. The Economy Committee requests officers to present the report referred to at (b) at the same time as the study for the potential redevelopment of the adjacent land is presented to the Committee.
- d. The Economy Committee agrees to the Brewers Fayre being used as site offices and welfare during the construction of the Alexandra Theatre upgrades.

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 The report appended at Appendix 1 provides the feasibility study requested into the option to explore short and long term uses for the building which this Committee agreed in June 2023.

3.2 Three options have been considered:

- Option 1 would see the building refurbished into a multi-use facility that would be an integral part of the Alexandra Theatre. Facilities such as kitchen and toilets would be shared and the building would be managed by the Theatre operator.
- Option 2 would see the building refurbished into a stand-alone multi-use facility with its own kitchen and toilet, intended to be managed by its own management. This might create unwanted competition with the Theatre.
- Option 3 has been considered in less detail than the other 2 options and would see the building semi rebuilt to align architecturally with the Theatre next door. The work would provide the same facilities as optio1 but with the additional external façade work.
- Option 3a, not explored in this study, would see the demolition of the existing building and replacement with a new, higher building, with additional facilities such as sea view restaurants etc.

4. DETAIL

4.1 The internal re-planning of the Brewers Fayre pub is relatively straightforward. The primary space of the hall etc can be rediscovered by the removal of internal, non-structural walls and depending upon the operational management of the development, the layouts offer a good opportunity to deliver a range of flexible performance spaces. Unfortunately, the building's elevations remain subservient and unconvincing. Applying similar external materials to those identified as part of the new theatre design may help with this issue but the contrast in scale and mass remains a significant risk. A new build option (Option 3) has been provided to give the Council a feel for the issues involved, such as increased capital build costs, albeit this would better compliment and match the aesthetic and architecture of the new theatre. There is also the question of operating costs for a larger building, but the resulting form and mass is much more in-keeping with the proposed theatre redevelopment. Regardless of which design option is adopted, there remains the opportunity of improving the public realm and landscape on the seafront by removing the pub terrace, enhancing linkage and connectivity between the Place Saint-Maur, Esplanade, Regis car park and associated areas.

4.2 Main brief requirements:

- Entrance facing the adjacent square (The 'Place')
- Hall – To cater for up to 800 people (standing) and 400 people (seated)
- Toilets

- Kitchen to serve main area (for canapes and ad-hoc catering, not a commercial or full catering kitchen)
- Bar area
- Manager's office space
- Separate plant space
- Elevations to match materials and design principles of the adjoining theatre.
- Consideration of internal connection to the adjoining theatre

4.3 A summary of costs for all options has been included within the cost report section, with a more detailed cost breakdown of Option 1 and 2 available in Appendix F of the main report, a summary overview has been included below. Ridge note that at this stage a summary of anticipated costs for Option 3 high-level estimate is included and involves the redesign/remodelling of the external envelope of the Brewers Fayre to match the new Alexandra Theatre design, but no further breakdown. This option requires design input from associated teams in order to provide a detailed breakdown of associated costs, as such a high-level cost has been included only based on a cost/m² of the Gross Internal Floor Area (GIA).

Estimate Summary	Cost Estimates		
	Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Building, external and facilitating works	3,243,505.00	3,262,987.00	5,077,987.00
Preliminaries, overheads and profit	766,278.00	770,881.00	1,199,674.00
Professional fees (estimate) 12%	481,173.96	484,064.16	753,319.32
Other development & contract costs	Excl	Excl	Excl
Risk allowance	400,900.00	403,500.00	627,800.00
Inflation	Excl	Excl	Excl
Total Costs, rounded up	4,891,856.96	4,921,432.16	7,658,780.32

4.4 Full details are included in the Ridge Consulting report attached at Appendix 1.

4.5 Of the three options available Option 1 would be recommended over option 2 as it provides a synergy with the Theatre. However, there is a significant cost associated with all the options and unless the Council is able to secure external funding to mitigate these costs or the Council is willing to fund these works through borrowing then such an ambitious project should not be pursued at this time and the Committee should consider securing 'meanwhile uses' for the building for potentially a period of 5 years after the building is vacated by the contractors on the theatre refurbishment.

4.6 The Council has commissioned a report looking at the redevelopment potential of the adjacent land and therefore it is recommended that further consideration of how this building/space should be utilised should be deferred until that additional report can be presented to the Committee. In the meantime it is recommended that the building be used as site offices for the contractors on the theatre refurbishment, and a report be prepared on the likely costs to be incurred in preparing a full business plan.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Planning consent for change of use will be required and public consultation will be undertaken prior to the submission of any planning application.

6. OPTIONS / ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

- 6.1 The options considered previously but not supported by the June 23 Committee meeting were:

- Offer the building to the market and allow developers and operators to make proposals for suitable uses.
- Additionally, the building redevelopment could be considered as part of a more comprehensive (or standalone) feasibility study which includes the adjacent Regis car park. This would effectively form an option 4 for the Brewers Fayre site and could include all of the facilities proposed in Options 1-3 but with further uses on 2-3 levels above, such as additional conferencing/events space, roof top restaurant & sky-bar, terracing and viewing platforms (an initial design feasibility has been considered for this option). Whilst in the short term/interim used by the main construction contractor for the Theatre redevelopment, for temporary site office, welfare and storage accommodation for the duration of that project.

7. COMMENTS BY THE GROUP HEAD OF FINANCE/SECTION 151 OFFICER

- 7.1 A business case / financial viability appraisal to be completed once the approved option has been identified with relevant approvals sought before proceeding with any project that is required to be financially viable.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 See appendix 1

9. COMMENTS OF THE GROUP HEAD OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE & MONITORING OFFICER

- 9.1 The Economy Committee is being asked to note the feasibility report but delay making decisions on the principle until the outcome of a report on the possible redevelopment of the adjoining land is presented to the Committee.
- 9.2 The key legal consideration is whether this is a reasonable decision. As a statutory body (in the absence of specific statutory direction) the council must make decisions taking into account all relevant considerations and ignoring irrelevant considerations.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 Taking forward a new project will require project officer time which is not currently budgeted for.

11. HEALTH & SAFETY IMPACT

11.1 A full health and safety risk assessment will be carried out as part of the construction project.

12. PROPERTY & ESTATES IMPACT

12.1 The use of the former Brewers Fayre as site accommodation would allow the NNDR to be charged to the Alexandra Theatre project rather than it being a revenue cost until any refurbishment project is agreed.

13. EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA) / SOCIAL VALUE

13.1 A full Equalities impact assessment will be carried out as part of the project design.

14. CLIMATE CHANGE & ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT/SOCIAL VALUE

14.1 Further work will need to be undertaken on the social value impacts of the project should the committee wish to proceed further with the projects.

15. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

15.1 None anticipated.

16. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT

16.1 None

17. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION / DATA PROTECTION CONSIDERATIONS

17.1 None

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 – FeasibilityReport (Ridge Construction & Property Consultants)