

Report Title: **Regeneration Update**

Report of: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive, Alexandra Palace Charitable Trust**

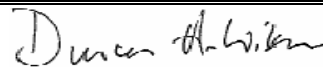
1. Purpose

- 1.1 To update the Board and provide a summary of progress since the last Board meeting on 24 July 2012
- 1.2 To share with the Board a proposal for a Major Grants bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, further to the discussion at the 20 September regen, project workshop which many Trustees attended

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Board notes the contents of the report
- 2.2 That the Board approves the proposal for a Major Grant bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and authorises the Chief Executive to sign the relevant documentation subject to the Chairman's approval on behalf of the Board

Report Authorised by: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive**



Contact Officer: **Duncan Wilson, Chief Executive, Alexandra Palace & Park, Alexandra Palace Way, Wood Green N22 7AY Tel No. 020 8365 4340**

3. Executive Summary

- 3.1 The report outlines progress with the regen. project and a summary of the proposed bid to the HLF for refurbishment of the BBC studios, the East Court and the Theatre.

4. Reasons for any change in policy or for new policy development (if applicable)

- 4.1 N/A

5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 5.1 N/A

6. Public Consultation: final results

- 6.1 Further to the draft findings tabled at the last meeting, the final results from the consultation were released on 25 July with a total of 2,194 responses received during the six week consultation period. The survey, which was available online and in hard copy format, invited respondents to give

feedback on plans and design concepts for regenerating Alexandra Palace, based on the strategic masterplan developed by Farrells. The question of 'Overall, I am supportive of the Alexandra Palace proposal' resulted in over 87% responding either as 'strongly agree' or 'agree'.

Respondents ranked the following aspects of the masterplan as priorities in the following order:

- Upgrading the main event Halls
- Opening up the Victorian Theatre
- Opening up the old BBC Studios
- Opening up the basement
- Building a hotel in the Palace.

To maximise the reach and response of the consultation:

- 21,000 consultation booklets were printed and distributed
- Details of the Regeneration plans and consultation survey were emailed to over 8,000 business and consumer contacts
- Feedback was requested via FaceBook, Twitter and the AP website
- A public exhibition was set up and available for viewing during the consultation period
- Presentations and meetings were held with local resident groups, local businesses, schools and community groups to outline and discuss our plans
- Three specialist workshops were scheduled to engage with minority groups within the Borough
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A summary of the consultation results have been added to the Alexandra Palace website - <http://www.alexandrapalace.com/about-us/regeneration/consultation-results/>

Independent communications consultants PPS reviewed the responses and prepared a detailed report on the consultation results, which is available for download from the Alexandra Palace website - <http://www.alexandrapalace.com/about-us/regeneration/downloads/>

Of the people who responded to the survey, a total of 82% had visited Alexandra Palace in the last year, with 32% having visited more than eight times in the last year. Importantly, when people were asked if they were more likely to visit the Palace if the proposals are realised, 79% of respondents agreed they would visit more frequently.

7. Approaching the market

We are procuring professional advisers to help us gain further market intelligence and frame our approach to the market and intend to appoint in the next month or so, depending on LBH procurement requirements and timetables. We will be recruiting from the Home and Communities Agency framework, which will speed up the process and gives us a wide choice of well known specialists. An oral update on progress will be provided at the Board Meeting.

8. **Master plan progress and update**

Farrells are proceeding with RIBA B design (essentially outline design, costed so that decisions can be made about lead design assumptions). They have been concentrating on the HLF scheme areas (refer 4. below), but have also done further work on the hotel plans for the Panorama Room site. The presence of a hotel would undoubtedly enhance our events offer in areas such as conferencing and exhibitions, and would impact significantly and positively on the local economy in terms of jobs and tourism.

Farrells' design assumption is that the ground floor of the hotel would be mainly occupied with publicly accessible rooms, eg cafes and dining rooms, to allow permeability onto the Terrace. On this basis and assuming that no significant intrusion is made onto the skyline they estimate that about 130 rooms with dimensions of a "Four Star" quality could be provided. If a further storey were added set back from the frontage this would increase to 180 rooms. Plans and elevations are attached and will be shown at the meeting. It remains to be seen if either of these proposals is attractive to the market, and of course whatever was done would need planning and listed building consent. Further work on this scheme and the refurbishment of the events arenas such as the Great Hall will be brought to the next appropriate Board Meeting.

Plans illustrating work to date will be presented at the meeting.

9. **HLF bid**

A copy of the final Pre-Application Enquiry, submitted to the HLF on Friday 14 September 2012, is attached for ease of reference, although it has also previously been circulated. We are in the process of finalising the details of our Round 1 Application, which will be submitted to the HLF by Friday 30 November 2012. Key parameters are set out below. The SAC and CC both backed the bid at their meeting on 26 October, although there was some discussion of the details of the scheme in Studio B.

In summary, we are proposing to bid to the HLF in respect of the following:

- (i) **Refurbishment of the East Court** (Ice Rink foyer) as the main public approach to the East end of the building, where visitors will gain access to the Theatre, the BBC Studios on the first floor of the SE Wing, and of course to the ice rink. The cost is proportionate to the size of the space (£2.4m plus fees and contingencies), balancing the need for economy with the need to transform the appearance of this critical area. The present state of the East Court is disappointing; on entry you are faced by a monolithic ticket office on a scale inappropriate to the grandeur of the room, and then by little-used attractions such as soft play and mini-golf. The ice rink beyond is not very noticeable. The historic fabric is in a poor state in places, with cornices missing, broken roof panes and leaking gutters. Two side pavilions were never roofed in glass but had temporary canvas roofs in the 1980s, now at the end of their lives. The floor is very uneven and there is a very energy inefficient and ineffective heating system and it is difficult to ventilate the space. The design proposals would deal with these issues, demolishing

the ticket office. Levelling the floor and creating a more appropriate welcome and sense of scale would make the place work better as creating a good first impression of Alexandra Palace. We are proposing a large scale model of the Palace as a centrepiece of an area in one of the side pavilions which will tell the overall story of Alexandra Palace, with a cafe area on the opposite side, the whole defined by plants and a water feature. There will also be enough space for occasional temporary exhibitions.

- (ii) **Refurbishment of the Theatre** is the most expensive part of the project at c £4.8m plus fees and contingencies. This is because the Theatre is in a very poor state, with the ceiling and wall plaster unstable and at least one of the roof trusses and the balcony in need of reinforcement. New services consistent with “flexible use” will need to be provided. That will give us the best chance of accommodating as many different uses as possible, which is the key to a successful business plan. So for example we want to accommodate not just theatrical performance and classical/pop concerts but also cinema including silent film shows, awards ceremonies, dinners, weddings and conferences. To achieve this flexibility, moveable seats and a flat floor are essential. Theatre in the round would then be possible, brought forward into the stalls with a thrust stage and closer to the balcony. This would help to get round the acoustic issues and the distance from the stage for which theatre was a well known drawback in its heyday. Our views on this have been influenced by the experience of our theatre designers Bonnar Keenlyside, and independent views expressed by potential partners such as English National Opera and Complicite.
- (iii) **Back of House facilities and the Theatre Foyer** must also be refurbished if we are to create a sustainable business. We also need to create new public lavatories for the audience, and a bar. Areas such as the NE tower and the pavilions leading off the Theatre foyer are in a very poor state. The cost is estimated at £3.5m plus fees and contingencies
- (iv) **The BBC studios and the South East Wing** are an extremely important part of the bid. The strategy is to develop them as a visitor attraction for guided tours and as the focus of our learning programme. We cannot feasibly refurbish the whole SE wing, so we now recommend refurbishing both Studios A (Marconi) and B (Baird) on the first floor, with the small back of house rooms between them, at £4.3m plus fees and contingencies. An exhibition telling the story of TV at Alexandra Palace would take up Studio A, with Studio B as a projection room for TV film archive or occasional use for other functions. Studio B would be much more flexible if the inner and outer window openings were both unblocked and the room were re-glazed, but with blackout blinds so that it could be turned back into a studio easily. However that would interfere with its historic authenticity. English Heritage’s views would be significant. Further research is needed before a firm decision is made on this aspect of the scheme.

The rooms in between Studios A and B would be used as a Learning Centre, effectively replacing previous plans for the Transmitter Hall (now omitted). The Learning Centre would incorporate teaching space, and space for classes to assemble, leave coats, and eat packed lunches

- (v) **External facade.** We would unblock all the outer eastern colonnade openings, to reinstate symmetry with the western colonnade. Limited unblocking of the inner colonnade openings is still under discussion, pending historical, cost and practical considerations.
- (vi) **Landscaping and architectural lighting.** There would be some re-landscaping of the approach to the Palace from the east, particularly in front of the Theatre foyer. An energy efficient architectural lighting scheme is included for the SE elevation and the BBC tower and mast.
- (vii) **Activity plan.** In addition, the HLF expects a costed “activity plan” to demonstrate that we are reaching out to communities and groups beyond our “normal” visitor and resident profile, making good use of the new facilities.. To implement this we have applied for £700k over five years to fund an additional Learning Officer, Archivist/Curator and Volunteer Co-ordinator. Other activities which this budget would support include fundraising and project management. There will also be an archives and a digitisation programme to draw on the TV and Theatre archives held by bodies such as the APTV Society and make them available digitally.

The overall cost plan provides for professional fees (15%) to implement the scheme, contingencies (10%) and inflation (7%). It assumes that all VAT is recoverable. There are provisions against major but un-quantified risks such as asbestos removal.

10. Programme Timescales

The HLF bid timescale is tightly circumscribed by HLF. We have to submit by end-November for a decision on our Stage 1 bid in April 2013 – which will essentially be a decision “in principle” . We would then need at least another year for the preparation of a Stage 2 bid, to RIBA Stage D design level. If successful at Stage 2, we would then need to tender the construction project, which would mean a start on site at the beginning of 2015 and completion in late 2016. We would need to have raised up to £6.7m in matched funding by the end of 2013.

The timetable and process for the offer to market is much less certain. However we should be prepared to wait for the right developer/operating partner, and the right economic climate for such a significant investment, which may take time.

11. Cost

The total cost is estimated by our QS Mott MacDonald at £23.2m, divided into a Development phase of £1.3m (April 2013- March 2014) and a Delivery phase of £21.9m (April 2014-end 2016). After consultation we are asking HLF for £16.5m of this total cost, which would be an exceptionally large grant if successful. But it is an ambitious programme which would transform Alexandra Palace’s public, community and cultural offer. The match funding requirement would therefore be £6.7m. At this stage the Trust would only have to commit to raising the match funding element for

the Development phase, i.e. c £350k, which should be coverable within the existing provision for Regen. In 2013-14 if necessary.

We will endeavour to raise match funding for the project from private trusts and donors, and we will be asking the Borough for a contribution should we be successful with our Stage 1 bid.

12. Recommendations

- 12.1 The Board notes the report and approves the detail of the bid for £16.5m from HLF and the matched funding requirement of up to £6.7m, authorising the Chief Executive to submit the full bid documentation on this basis subject to the approval of the Chairman on behalf of the Board.

13. Legal and Financial Comment

- 13.1 The Council's Head of Legal Services has no comments on this report.

14. Financial Implications

14.1 Comments of Haringey Council Chief Finance Officer:

- (i) Any project of this scale needs to have strong project management and the approach to this will require careful consideration and appropriate resourcing.
- (ii) The project cost of £23.2m will need to include adequate contingency sums. It is noted that the HLF bid is for £16.5m leaving £6.7m (if 100% of the bid is awarded) to be found from match-funding.
- (iii) The Trust should note that the Council had not made any decision regarding revenue funding levels for 2013/14. So no firm position can be taken regarding the ability to fund the £350k referred to in para 11.

15. Use of Appendices/Tables/Photographs

- 15.1 HLF Pre-application enquiry
15.2 Drawings and plans (as presented to SAC/CC)