

For General Release

REPORT TO:	CABINET 20 October 2015
AGENDA ITEM:	6
SUBJECT:	College Green Cultural and Educational Quarter
LEAD OFFICER:	Jo Negrini, Executive Director Place
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Alison Butler, Deputy Leader (Statutory) and Cabinet Member for Homes, Regeneration and Planning Councillor Timothy Godfrey, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Sport
WARDS:	Fairfield
<p>CORPORATE PRIORITY/POLICY CONTEXT:</p> <p>The Corporate Plan (2015 – 2018) sets out how the Council will deliver on three key ambitions:</p> <p>GROWTH – creating growth in our economy</p> <p>INDEPENDENCE – helping residents be as independent as possible</p> <p>LIVEABILITY – creating a welcoming, pleasant place in which local people want to live</p> <p>The corporate plan contains the Council’s contribution to Croydon’s Community Strategy (2014 – 2018) developed by Croydon’s Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The recommendation within this report addresses the priorities for developing Croydon as an attractive place in which to live, work and visit. The new Cultural Quarter and rejuvenation of the Fairfield Halls will address the following priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Enterprising City – a place renowned for its enterprise and innovation with highly adaptable and skilled workforce and diverse and responsive economy • A Learning City – a place that unleashes and nurtures local talent, is recognised for its culture of lifelong learning and ambitions for children and young people • A Creative City – a place noted for culture and creativity – one of the best incubators of new artistic and sporting talent in the country • A Connected City – a place defined by its connectivity and permeability with one of the best digital, communications and transport networks in the country <p>The “Cultural and Educational Quarter” will play a significant role in contributing and benefiting from the regeneration and growth of the borough; improving the attractiveness of Croydon as a destination, as well as an increased sense of belonging, wellbeing and independence through increased participation in a broad range of cultural, educational, community and artistic activities.</p>	
<p>AMBITIOUS FOR CROYDON & WHY ARE WE DOING THIS:</p> <p>This work will help the Council meet the aspirations in Ambitious for Croydon by creating an innovative and inspiring area with a lively and sustainable mix of commercial, residential, cultural, educational uses and a well-connected and high</p>	

quality public realm with the Fairfield Halls and Croydon College at the centre.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Based on initial work the value from the development should deliver the new college and further enhancements to Fairfield without the need for contribution above the existing £12m council allocation.

The council is currently reviewing funding options to ensure we explore all options for financing the scheme to help achieve value for money.

KEY DECISION REFERENCE NO.: 23/15/CAB.

This is a Key Decision as defined in the Council's Constitution. The decision may be implemented from 13.00 hours on 5th working day after it is made, unless the decision is referred to the Scrutiny & Strategic Overview Committee by the requisite number of Councillors.

The Leader of the Council has delegated to the Cabinet the power to make the decisions set out in the recommendations below

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to:

- 1.1 Note progress on the Fair Field regeneration scheme
- 1.2 Agree for the inclusion of a new, purpose built facility for Croydon College at Barclay Road Annexe within the scheme, subject to planning approval and the completion of the necessary legal documentation.
- 1.3 Agree for the inclusion of a redevelopment of the remainder of the Croydon College land interests within the scheme, subject to planning approval and the completion of the necessary legal documentation.
- 1.4 Agree to the principle of the redevelopment scheme for Fairfield Halls as outlined in section 4, subject to planning approval.
- 1.5 Agree that the Fairfield Halls be closed for the duration of the redevelopment project in order to avoid additional development costs and associated risks.
- 1.6 Agree that the Executive Director for Place and Assistant Chief Executive, Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Homes, Regeneration and Planning and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Treasury:
 - i) Be given delegated authority to conclude and agree the variations to the existing multi-disciplinary consultant's contract (Contract no. 427/2014D&E) necessary to implement recommendations 1.2 and 1.3.
 - ii) Be given delegated authority to take such decisions as are necessary, including entering into any relevant commercial agreements, to progress the vision for the integrated College Green and Fairfield Halls development as outlined in this report. Where progression of these proposals will entail entering into contracts, including those relating to the acquisition or disposal of land, these will be approved in accordance with the Council's Tenders and Contracts Regulations and section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 or 233 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990

- as appropriate.
- iii) Be given delegated authority to take any steps necessary, subject to a satisfactory planning consent, public advertisement and the consideration of any objections, to appropriate any parcels of land required to implement the proposals outlined in this report, pursuant to the Council’s powers under section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972.

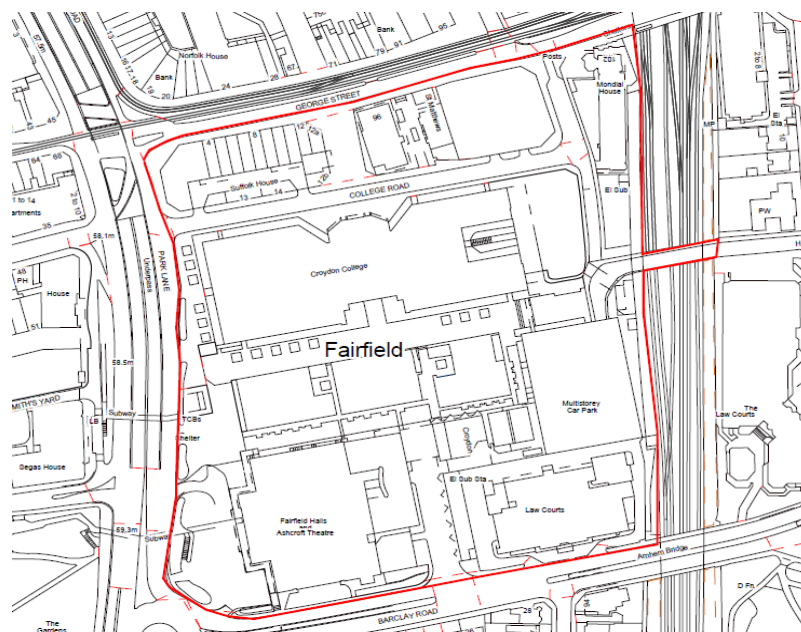
2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

2.1 This paper presents an update on the “Vision for College Green and Fairfield Halls as part of a Cultural Quarter” which was agreed by Cabinet in September 2014.

2.2 The College Green area and immediate surroundings are crucial to defining a sustainable future for Croydon and its town centre. It has genuine potential to be Croydon’s new Cultural and Educational Quarter, an innovative and inspiring area with a lively mix of cultural, educational, commercial and residential uses, and a well-connected and high quality public realm.

2.3 The council have appointed a professional team led by Mott MacDonald and Rick Mather Architects to deliver a hybrid planning application for the Fairfield area (see Fig 1 below).

Fig 1



2.4 This report seeks to update Cabinet on progress with the project and makes a number of recommendations designed to ensure the scheme is delivered in a timely manner, and the benefit of the scheme to Croydon residents is maximised.

3. A NEW CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL QUARTER

- 3.1** Following the Cabinet decision in September 2014, the Council took a new approach to delivering the holistic regeneration of the College Green area, including the rejuvenation of the Fairfield Halls.
- 3.2** The Council is in the process of working up a hybrid planning application for a mixed use scheme for this area. This scheme will deliver, across a number of phases, innovative cultural and educational facilities alongside major residential and commercial development, as well as significant landscaping, public realm and public art elements.
- 3.3** As part of the hybrid application the Council will seek to secure detailed consent on the 'Phase 1' element of the scheme. This detailed element will at a minimum include a high quality mixed use scheme on Council owned land at College Green and the improvements to the Fairfield Halls.
- 3.4** The development will deliver:
- A scheme of national architectural significance.
 - A unique and vibrant mix of uses including new homes, cultural spaces, educational facilities, offices, shops and restaurants
 - A modern flexible Fairfield Halls which is sympathetic to the architectural and heritage qualities of the building including new public facing food and beverage spaces and improved integration with the wider area.
 - A very high quality new public space suitable for both transition and rest, alongside other amenity provision for residents and visitors alike.
 - A variety of public art and opportunities for creative expression – a modern, attractive and culturally flexible space for Croydon.
 - A new high quality, animated, step free through route to and from East Croydon station, the town centre and wider borough.
- 3.5** Since the appointment of Mott MacDonald and Rick Mather Architects in March 2014 (Contract no. 427/2014D&E), to deliver a hybrid planning application for the development, a great deal of progress has taken place. Design for the scheme is progressing through the pre-application process and a presentation was made to planning committee on 30 July 2015. Feedback from that meeting has been incorporated into the emerging scheme and a further presentation to the planning committee is scheduled for 22 October when more detailed proposals will be discussed. The final planning application is due to be submitted in December 2015.
- 3.6** Discussions with the relevant stakeholders including Fairfield (Croydon) Ltd, Croydon College and private landowners around the site have been ongoing since the commencement of the project. These have remained positive and

productive and feedback from those meetings has informed the design approach for the development area.

4. FAIRFIELD HALLS

- 4.1** The scheme places the Fairfield Halls at the heart of the new Cultural and Educational Quarter. It will provide a high quality facility which will not only enhance the borough's cultural provision but also promote the economic development and regeneration of Croydon.
- 4.2** The design will be of exceptionally high quality to enable a transformation of the building aesthetically and commercially, whilst being sympathetic to the original design and heritage. The aim is to create a beautiful, highly flexible arts building which is commercially self-sufficient.
- 4.3** The building will be fully integrated with the surrounding area (above and below ground), and feature a new outward facing offer to the north (i.e. onto College Green from the Ashcroft Theatre façade) which will encourage additional visitors and customers.
- 4.4** The design approach for the Fairfield Halls is practical and heritage led. It currently proposes improving the appearance of the building by:
- Restoring facades
 - Replacing the windows
 - Rationalising the soft landscaping outside the building
 - New pavilion structure and lighting
 - Extending the forecourt and refurbishing and refining the canopies
 - Creating a transparent and uncluttered façade at the front of the building
- 4.5** The design also focuses on improving the way the building functions. Internal improvements currently include:
- Architectural lighting and signage, enhancing the existing architecture
 - New box office and "welcome" experience to improve the entrance and open up the foyer
 - Improving the circulation of the building
 - Creating more flexible arts spaces which can be used more intensively throughout the day and evening
 - Replacing the seats in the concert hall and theatre
 - Increased the stage size in the Concert Hall
 - Drastically improving the servicing approach, 'get-in' and back of house functions
 - Improving the mechanical and electrical make-up of the building, creating the ability for different parts of the building to operate independently
 - Improving the food and beverage, conferencing and theatre facilities

APPENDIX 1

- 4.6** To complement the new Fairfield Halls and enhance the area as a cultural destination, a new high quality public square is proposed in College Green and in the forecourt of the Halls. This will include new trees and green spaces as well new seating, areas of informal play, and a new outdoor performance space to complement the activity in Fairfield Halls.
- 4.7** New active frontages are proposed around the square with a range of uses including a new interface to the side of the Ashcroft Theatre to integrate the Fairfield Halls and College Green area.
- 4.8** A number of early projects have already been delivered in Fairfield Halls including improvements to the Arnhem Gallery, a new cinema offer in the Concert Hall and the creation of a new Studio at the back of the Halls.
- 4.9** £12m is currently available within the capital budget to fund the transformation works. The intention is for the wider College Green development to further subsidise the proposed works to enable a more comprehensive scheme.
- 4.10** In the course of analysing the deliverability of the scheme, the Council and their consultant team have reviewed a variety of phasing approaches to the Fairfield Halls works in the context of the wider development. One option is a phased approach which would involve a series of temporary closures over the period of the works for the three main areas of the building (the Concert Hall, Arnhem Gallery and Ashcroft Theatre) to facilitate the construction works.
- 4.11** This type of approach would involve a number of key risks:
- Programme risk – a phased approach would take longer, potentially adding at least a year to the construction programme (from c24 months to c36 months). This additional time has a cost implication (see below).
 - Complexity Risk – working in phases adds a significant degree of complexity to both the works themselves and the associated contractual arrangements. This is likely to limit the number of contractors willing to bid for this work and creates a significant procurement risk.
 - Health and Safety Risk – delivering major construction works within a publicly accessible building creates risks around safety.
 - Quality of Service risk – delivering major construction works within a working cultural building creates risks around customer experience which could lead to negative public and performer perceptions of the building.
- 4.12** A phased approach would also incur significant additional costs:
- Programme Cost – a longer programme incurs significant additional costs around site set up costs, prelims, insurances, construction cost inflation and diseconomies of scale.
 - Management and Administration – administering a phased construction contract within an operational building will incur additional management and monitoring costs.
 - Abortive works – much of the works, especially mechanical and electrical related works, would require costly temporary solutions to be put in place in order to enable completion of the areas in a phased manner.

APPENDIX 1

- Out of hours working – it is likely that a phased approach would involve significant period of out of hours working which would incur additional cost.
- The aggregate increased cost involved in phasing the proposed works has been estimated by the consultant team at c£4.8m.

4.13 In order to avoid these risks and costs, it is recommended that a full closure of Fairfield Halls takes place for the duration of the redevelopment project. On current estimates, this will realise a potential time saving at least 12 months and a cost saving of c£4.8m.

5. CROYDON COLLEGE

5.1 Croydon College was originally established as the ‘Croydon College of Art’ in 1868, which subsequently merged with Croydon Polytechnic to form Croydon College. The College is one of the largest providers of Further and Higher Education courses in the South East, offering over 350 courses to approximately 8,000 students. The college is a key stakeholder within the Fair Field area with two land interests on the Fair Field site:

- Main college building dating from the 1950s
- Barclay Road Annexe (former Arts school) building dating from the 1960s (his building is currently not in use).

5.2 The College focusses on improving employability and progression outcomes for students and regularly reviews its curriculum offer to meet the skills demands of employers, students and the wider community. The College is committed to remaining in Croydon, serving the Borough’s needs but also has reach into and impact on London and across the Gatwick Diamond. Curriculum areas forecast to grow during the period over the next three to five years include Science, Health and Social Care, Childcare, Construction, Motor Vehicle Related, Engineering, Retail, Customer Services and Digital Creative Arts. There will be further increase in apprenticeships and Higher Education. Numbers on apprenticeship programmes have increased three fold over the past year and the success rates are now 10% above the national benchmark.

5.3 The College also houses the University Centre Croydon which is one of the largest providers of Higher Education between London and Brighton. The University Centre has entered into a strategic partnership with the University of Sussex who validate the majority of the College HE courses. The College is working closely with the University to develop this partnership to increase the access to higher education courses in the Croydon area.

APPENDIX 1

- 5.4** The evolving Further Education environment means that colleges have to be positioned to react positively to changes in government initiatives such as investing in FE and Skills, apprenticeships, skills for sustainable growth and working with employers to provide training opportunities and responding to movements in curriculum popularity and content. One important aspect of this is the ability to provide high quality accommodation to reflect the learning environments of the twenty first century and commercial training environments.
- 5.5** The College currently operates from the Fairfield building which contains c36,000 sqm of internal space. Around 26,000 sqm of this space has been refurbished over the last 15 years but 10,000 sqm still remains to be refurbished with a potential cost of around £20m. In addition to this, the space is no longer configured appropriately for modern further and higher education delivery with too many small rooms and outdated services provision.
- 5.6** The College regularly reviews its estates strategy in the light of current and future curriculum needs and the requirements for increases in cost efficiency as a result of reductions in further education funding. The planning application presents an opportunity, supported by the College, to provide purpose built accommodation to the east of Fairfield Halls that is specifically designed to meet their current requirements and future objectives while remaining within the Fair Field and East Croydon area.
- 5.7** The overall aim of the development is to bring forward a transformative change in the quality of the environment in this part of the town centre, and in this context discussions have taken place with the college regarding their aspirations for educational provision on site, including their level of interest in a wholesale relocation and redevelopment of their remaining land holdings. The new college requirement would take the form of a purpose-built facility of c20,000 sqm and the LBC Development Team have undertaken an exercise to review the costs and values across the relevant site areas to determine how this might be enabled.
- 5.8** Following this exercise, it was proposed that the council provide a new college facility on the site of the current Barclay Road Annexe (between the Fairfield Halls and the Magistrates Court) as well as part of the council owned land on College Green (see fig 2). The new facility would be funded by the development value of the remaining college assets which would revert to council ownership. This arrangement would allow for the college to remain fully operational within their current building while the new facility is being built.

Fig 2



5.9 Heads of Terms have been drafted for these proposals and discussed by the Governors of the College in Sep 15. The Board agreed for the College Executive to work with the Council Executive to progress the scheme in line with the Heads of Terms, subject to formal legal agreement.

5.10 To progress this proposal, the Council will develop the formal legal agreement with the college and include the provision of a new college facility within the Fair Field planning application, as well as a redevelopment scheme for the current main college site. This will incur additional professional fees which can be met by the existing capital budget.

6. PROGRAMME

6.1 The overall timetable is ambitious in order to achieve a start on site in Spring/Summer 2016. The indicative programme is as follows:

- Procurement of the professional team – March 2015 - complete
- Initial design phase for the project – April to September 2015 - complete
- First presentation to planning committee – 30 July 2015 - complete
- Second planning committee presentation – 22 October 2015
- Further stakeholder engagement – Sept/Oct 2015
- Planning application submitted – Dec 2015
- Planning decision – April 2016
- Phase 1 schemes (Fairfield Halls, College, College Green Residential) start on site – Summer 2016 (subject to agreement)
- Completion of phase 1 schemes – Summer 2018

7. CONSULTATION

7.1 In keeping with the productive delivery partnerships forged elsewhere in the town centre, work is underway with key public sector stakeholders for the site (Courts Service, Network Rail, TFL, GLA etc.) regarding the emerging scheme.

7.2 Discussions are also ongoing with the private sector landowners on the wider

APPENDIX 1

site regarding how their aspirations for their own landholdings might be best represented within the wider planning application, in order to bring forward delivery. These discussions are positive and practical and will continue as the planning application is worked up in more detail.

7.3 Much consultation has taken place regarding the development potential of these sites in previous years. Further consultation will take place to present the emerging proposals publicly as part of the design and planning process. This will take place in October 15. In addition, there will be opportunities to comment as part of the planning process.

7.4 A communications strategy has been developed as part of the project and this is continually reviewed to ensure it is fit for purpose.

8. FINANCIAL AND RISK ASSESSMENT CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 Revenue and Capital consequences of report recommendations

	Current year	Medium Term Financial Strategy – 3 year forecast		
	2015/16 £'000	2016/17 £'000	2017/18 £'000	2018/19 £'000
Revenue Budget available				
Expenditure				
Income				
Effect of decision from report				
Expenditure				
Income				
Remaining budget	4,383	4,000	5,000	
Capital Budget available				
Expenditure	1,686			
Effect of decision from report	550			
Expenditure				
Remaining budget	2,147	4,000	5,000	

8.2 The effect of the decision

8.2.1 The decision will result in variations to the existing multi-disciplinary consultant's contract (Contract no. 427/2014D&E) which is being finalised and will be circa £475k, as well as legal and advisory costs for the College in order to include the new College building and existing site.

8.2.2 The net costs of the scheme to the Council will be within the £12m capital allocation with the agreed capital programme. The Current profile of that budget

allocation is set out above.


8.2.3 Based on early work undertaken by the consultant team the value from the development should deliver the new college and further enhancements to Fairfield whilst capping the council contribution at £12m.


8.2.4 The council is reviewing all funding options to finance the scheme to ensure we achieve value for money.

8.3 Risks

1. Delays to start of the Fairfield Halls element of scheme resulting in building and equipment failures and potential financial exposure for Fairfield Halls and the Council. This is being mitigated by prioritizing early works and enabling the scheme to start by summer of 2016.
2. The scheme is not viable due to mix of uses and inclusion of Fairfield Halls and College building resulting in a stalled scheme. The council have appointed commercial advisors as part of the multi-disciplinary team producing the planning application and they are reviewing the scheme on an ongoing basis to ensure viability. This will need to be shown as part of the planning application.
3. Potential to lose audiences and income from the closure of Fairfield Halls during the construction phase. This will be mitigated through investigating the more intensive use of other local venues (e.g. Braithwaite Hall) and implementing an interim artistic programme and series of promotional events and activities leading up to the re-opening of the building.

8.4 Options

 The options were reviewed in September 2014 as part of the “Cultural Quarter – Rejuvenating Fairfield” cabinet paper. The delivery route outlined in this paper is the outcome of the chosen option. As such no further options have been considered.

 A phased closure period could be utilised for the construction Fairfield Halls construction period. This option has been discounted due to cost impact on the capital project.

8.5 Future savings/efficiencies

8.5.1 Once the development is completed, a more commercially efficient Fairfield Halls should have a significantly reduced need for public subsidy.

8.6 Approved by Richard Simpson, Assistant Chief Executive Corporate Resources and Section 151 Officer:

9. COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR AND MONITORING OFFICER

APPENDIX 1

9.1 The Council Solicitor comments that as set out in the recommendations to this report any land disposals will need to comply with section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 and /or section 233 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as appropriate. Legal advice will be provided on this and other aspects arising out of the proposals throughout the course of the project.

9.2 Approved by: Sean Murphy, Principal Corporate Solicitor (Regeneration) on behalf of the Borough Solicitor & Director of Legal & Democratic Services

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPACT

10.1 There are no human resources implications from this report

10.2 Approved by Adrian Prescod, HR Business Partner, for and on behalf of Director of HR, Resources Department.

11. EQUALITIES IMPACT

11.1 A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and approved for the Fair Field Masterplan.

11.2 An initial Equalities Analysis has been completed for the modernisation of the Fairfield Halls. The initial analysis highlighted that Fairfield Halls are a part of the boroughs cultural infrastructure and without this remodelling the building will continue to deteriorate, putting the organisation at risk. This project could have a positive impact on young people, which accounts for a large proportion of Fairfield audiences, in allowing them to continue to access events and programmes.

11.3 An updated Equalities analysis is being prepared as part of the ongoing development of the Cultural and Educational Quarter and will be monitored throughout the programme of works. The creation of the Cultural and Educational Quarter with a revitalised Fairfield Halls provides an excellent opportunity for the development of new activities and events which support community cohesion, bringing people together, attracting and involving new audiences.

12. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

12.1 The Project plan presents an excellent opportunity to create a truly integrated site-wide environmental strategy. The scale and mix of buildings allows centralised energy plant by linking complementary energy profiles. This project will be mindful of these wider aspirations as it offers potential for a wider energy strategy.

12.2 In terms of the Fairfield Halls, the building regulations will impact on the performance of the environmental services and new & renovated thermally exposed fabric, as well as to structural alterations, changes in layout and construction that affect loading, fire safety and accessibility.

13. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPACT

13.1 There are no direct crime and disorder reduction impacts arising from the recommendations of this report. However, the design will take this into account.

14. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS/PROPOSED DECISION

14.1 The recommendations within this report are essential for the efficient delivery of a comprehensive development of the College Green area to create the new “Cultural and educational Quarter”, including a new college facility and modernised Fairfield Halls.

15. OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

15.1 The options were reviewed in September 2014 as part of the “Cultural Quarter – Rejuvenating Fairfield” cabinet paper. The delivery route outlined in this paper is the outcome of the chosen option. As such no further options have been considered.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS - LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: none