

Octagon Theatre – Addition to the Capital Programme

Executive Member: Councillor Bill Revans – Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Governance and Communications

Division and Local Member: All

Lead Officers: Duncan Sharkey – Chief Executive and Alyn Jones – Executive Director for Strategy, Workforce and Localities

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1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the Leader’s and Executive’s recommendations to Council arising from their consideration of reports at the Executive meeting on 8 May 2024.

Note: The references in this report to Paper A relate to the relevant report considered by the Executive containing specific recommendations for Full Council to consider and are appended to this report for reference.

- 1.2 **Paper A (Octagon Theatre – Addition to Capital Programme)** was considered at the Executive meeting on 8 May. The Executive endorsed Paper A and agreed for this to be reported to Full Council to consider and approve.

This report highlights that the extension and refurbishment of the Octagon Theatre in Yeovil was previously part of the Council’s Capital Programme but Members approved its removal due to it being unaffordable. However, a further opportunity to bid for the Department for Culture Media and Sport grant was offered and this is now progressing well against a smaller refurbishment ambition. It is a requirement of the bid that the scheme is added to the Council’s Capital Programme and meeting this requirement is the primary objective of this decision.

The report details that a revised Octagon scheme is now proposed. This has an indicative cost of £15m funded by the bid to DCMS (£10m), an in principle offer from Yeovil Town Council (£3.75m), and the remainder held by Somerset Council from previous fund raising and ticket levy. With the current estimated costs of the revised scheme there would be no requirement for further capital input from Somerset Council, however Somerset Council would bear some financial risk as the accountable body for the scheme.

The report proceeds to note that as part of a wider devolution conversation with Yeovil Town Council, they have requested the asset and service transfer of the Octagon Theatre. A decision on this devolution proposal will be taken in due course, following consideration of the proposal by the Council's Asset Management Group.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Paper A (Octagon Theatre – Addition to Capital Programme)** – see Paper A and its appendices that the Executive considered and endorsed at its meeting on 8 May 2024.

That Full Council add the revised Octagon project to the Council Capital Programme, on the proviso that a build contract is not awarded and build work does not commence until a devolution deal has been finalised with Yeovil Town Council.

3. Options considered and consultation undertaken

- 3.1** Options considered and details of consultation undertaken in respect of the recommendations set out above are set out in the reports and appendices within Paper A.

4. Implications

- 4.1** Financial, legal, Human Resources, equalities, human rights and risk implications in respect of the recommendations set out in this report are detailed within Paper A.

It is essential that consideration is given to the legal obligations and in particular to the need to exercise the equality duty under the Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the impacts based on sufficient evidence appropriately analysed.

The duties placed on public bodies do not prevent difficult decisions being made such as, reorganisations and service reductions, nor does it stop decisions which may affect one group more than another. What the duties do is require consideration of all of the information, including the potential impacts and mitigations, to ensure a fully informed decision is made.

5. Background Papers

5.1 These are set out within Paper A and its appendices.