

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

**TO: RESOURCES SUB COMMITTEE - 23RD AUGUST
1999/LEISURE AND AMENITIES - 20TH SEPTEMBER 1999**

**SUBJECT: CULTURAL QUARTER - COMMUNITY ARTS WORKSHOP
USE OF SPENCER YARD, LEAMINGTON SPA**

**FROM: COMMISSIONING TEAM/HEAD OF LEISURE AND
AMENITIES**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek agreement to undertaking a number of steps in principle to initiate the process of developing a Cultural Quarter but in particular to the granting of a lease for property in Spencer Yard, Leamington Spa to Community Arts Workshop (CAW).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The concept of a Cultural Quarter has been supported by this Council since 1995 when it was agreed by the Leisure and Amenities Committee. Work to see the concept realised rests on the foundation of the Royal Pump Room redevelopment which has got off to an exceptionally good start with the assembly rooms, library, TIC, cafe and part of the art gallery and museum now open, and attracting large numbers of local people and visitors to this end of town. The rest of the art gallery and museum will open on 28 August, bringing the whole of the public areas into use. It looks, therefore, that the Pump Rooms has the capacity to be a focal point for the Cultural Quarter, making the critical link between the north and south banks of the river.
- 2.2 Other important work undertaken by this Council to turn the concept into reality includes: the Lottery bid to refurbish Jephson Gardens; a prefeasibility study for a cultural quarter lottery bid; improvements to the Spa Centre; the regeneration work in Old Town and Town Centre Action Plan for the whole of Leamington. The Council has also laid the remainder of the foundations for the Cultural Quarter concept by purchasing premises around Spencer Yard (see the attached map). The purchases include the former North and West Wings of the Congregational Church, the former Employment Exchange and the lease on the Church itself. All of this work has been aided by the interest shown and investments by other organisations. For example, Warwickshire College is seeking to develop the York Road Annexe, including the existing Art Gallery and Library, as a Warwickshire School of Arts.
- 2.3 There is also strong interest within the local community in arts and the concept of an arts/cultural facility in the area, such that a community organisation has been formed - the Community Arts Workshop (CAW). Details of the

organisation are included at Appendix 1. For a number of months volunteers of the organisation have been working on plans to create an accessible art facility. The proposal was included within the Single Regeneration Budget bid (SRB5) which was successful in receiving £4.46 million pounds over 7 years. Although the precise amount of SRB funding to go towards the CAW proposal has yet to be finalised, it should be sufficient to start the scheme and to lever in funding from elsewhere.

2.4 Some details of the scheme and an outline of their business case are attached at Appendix 2. The scheme involves the use of the North and West Wings and the former Employment Exchange in Spencer Yard. It also involves collaboration with the Loft Theatre and the Leamington Studio Artists. Indeed this proposal offers the opportunity for the Loft Theatre to be used to a far greater degree by a range of groups (as well as the Theatre Company itself) than is currently the case, by creating alternative space for storage, set creation and rehearsals. It also includes provision for artist's studio space. There are also commercial opportunities to be realised for the adjacent Manor House Hotel by providing a more direct link to the Pump Rooms and other attractions.

2.5 To turn this part of the vision of a Cultural Quarter into reality, a number of practical steps need to be undertaken and these are largely property matters, hence the referral to this Committee as well as to Leisure. Leisure Committee will receive this report and presentation in September. Those steps are as follows:

- * detailed costings of the works necessary to make the buildings usable for the intended purposes and planning permission, building regulations, etc. will need to be sought. CAW has a team of architects, quantity surveyors and acoustic engineers who will undertake the work on a deferred payment basis. The Council's Property Manager is seeking costings on the structural survey of the properties which has already been undertaken;
- * other funding bids need to be made by CAW- to the County Council, to the Arts Lottery, and other charitable sources;
- * to be able to make other funding bids, CAW needs to show that it has a legal interest in the land. A 25-year lease would be sufficient. The Council could agree to grant such a lease in principle to be followed by detailed negotiations on the financial basis for the lease which will be referred to this Committee for a decision;
- * the volunteers, some of whom have been working full time but unpaid, need some financial assistance to complete the preparatory work. Such support if matched by contributions from other sources could come from a Key Issues budget. The Economic and Community Development Sub Committee should be asked to consider a contribution as the scheme will clearly aid the achievement of a number of Key Issues.

- 2.6 In respect of the Cultural Quarter overall, a review of the prefeasibility study is underway and this should enable the Council and its partners to consider the change in circumstances, the new developments and the new opportunities.

3. KEY ISSUES STRATEGIES

- 3.1 The Council's Corporate Strategy now includes a provision for the creation of a Cultural Quarter in Royal Leamington Spa. Step 3 of Economic Development Policy ED7 specifically supports the creation of Cultural Quarter in Royal Leamington Spa.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That Councillors support the steps to be taken to achieve the Cultural Quarter, as set out at paragraph 2.5

Background Papers

SRB5 Bid - Transforming Old Town

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Areas in District Affected: All wards in Leamington

CAW Capital Costs

Identified costs:

£

Building and refurbishment

Heating and rewiring and upgrade mains supply for West Wing and North Hall	30,000
Internal building work for West Wing	10,000
Internal building work for North Hall	12,000
Lift for North Hall	15,000
Contingency (5%)	3,000
Improvement works to former Employment Exchange	30,000
Improvements to Outdoor area	28,000
Sub Total	128,000

Equipment

West Wing

Lighting (incl. dormer racks and control desk)	32,000
PA (fully portable)	28,000
Video Projector and screen	7,000
Seating	6,000
Stagings (fully portable)	5,000
Fittings	2,000
Soundproofing (incl. blackout)	20,000
Security	2,000
Air conditioning	2,000
Contingency	5,000
Sub Total	110,000

North Hall

New Media Workshop	10,000
Recording Studio	30,000
Visual Arts Workshop	7,000
Photographic darkroom	3,000
Fittings and furniture	5,000
PA (incl. installation)	8,000
Sound Proofing	20,000
Contingency	4,000
Sub Total	87,000

Former Employment Exchange	
Fittings and soundproofing	15,000
Video Camera, lighting and edit suite	15,000
5 year Van Lease	10,000
Contingency	2,000
Sub Total	42,000
Total	368,000

Unidentified Costs

New roofs for the west Wing and North Hall - incl. adequate sound proofing
New entrance lobby, toilet block, small cafe
Repointing and damp proofing of the West Wing and North Hall

CAW Revenue

CAW has been established to work on the principle that it will not be dependent on grants from other bodies but will have a number of income earning opportunities that will generate revenue to cover costs. The income earning opportunities include:

- * a cafe facing onto the River Leam;
- * a bar to serve both the North Hall and West Wing;
- * studio space for hire
- * concerts
- * workshops
- * in house design and media services
- * sales from gallery, etc

It is envisaged that the following activities and organisations will be involved:

- * Theatre, music, cabaret, film
- * Gallery and exhibition space
- * Arts workshops
- * Rehearsal area for local musicians
- * Community recording studio
- * Cafe opening into Riverside Gardens and walk
- * Artists Studio spaces for amateurs and professionals
- * Work with Loft Theatre
- * Brass 2000
- * Mid Warwickshire MIND - placing of volunteers
- * Drake Project office and workshop (National Charity doing music with disabled people)
- * Space for Outdoor exhibition, performance and market
- * Children's play area - externally and internally
- * Community Information and Reference Point
- * Multi-media facility - including Internet & community publishing
- * Focus for community social activity

- * All productions and equipment capable to be used in wider community eg at Sikh Community Centre
- * dedicated and participative programme aimed at excluded sections of the community