

SUBJECT: MONMOUTHSHIRE MUSEUMS: ABERGAVENNY CASTLE EVENTS PAVILION

MEETING: ECONOMY AND DEVELOPMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

DATE: 22nd NOVEMBER 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- To update the Economy and Development Select Committee on the proposed Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion.
- To answer questions asked at the previous meeting we attended.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To endorse the Business Case for the Outdoor Events Pavilion at Abergavenny Castle
- 2.2 To endorse the Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study

3. KEY ISSUES:

3.1. In October 2017 the Museums Service attended Select Committee to seek comments regarding the Abergavenny Events Pavilion and to seek a loan towards the building costs.

3.2. At this meeting the Committee requested further information on the following issues:

3.2.1 Costings of the build (Appendix 1- Business Case)

3.2.1. That Abergavenny Town Council be approached for funding towards the project. (Appendix 2)

3.2.2 Confirmation that the lease with the Nevill Estate would continue beyond 2020 (Appendix 3)

3.2.3. Projected income generation (Appendix 4)

3.2.5. Consideration of the installation of permanent toilets (Verbal)

3.2.6. Clarification of the advantages of a permanent structure over a marquee and the Issues that would arise if it was not installed (Report Section 5 – Options Appraisal and Appendix 5)

3.2.7. The value to tourists as well as the local community (Appendix 1 – Business Case)

3.2.8. The potential for the structure to be used as a wedding venue (Appendices 5 and 7)

3.2.9. Opportunities for local businesses, volunteers and Monmouthshire Ambassadors to be involved in the project. (Appendix 7 – Events Feasibility, Appendix 1 – Section 4.9 – Volunteers, Section 4.10 – Monmouthshire Ambassadors)

4. EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

In summary this proposal has positive effects on all Well Being Goals, particularly helping towards delivering: A prosperous Wales, A Wales of cohesive communities, A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language.

A Future Generations Evaluation is attached. This includes Equalities and Sustainability Impact Assessments (attached as Appendix 6).

Section 3 of Appendix 1 – Business Case – Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion, further outlines the contribution the project makes to the Well Being Goals.

The ‘Events Project’ has been initiated in order to more fully realise the full potential of Abergavenny Museum and Castle to act as an events venue. Events and related activities are well recognised as being central to service delivery. The work has identified useful links across council service delivery, looked to build shared capacity to deliver events, and realised new income generating opportunities in order to improve financial viability and service sustainability. Events provide an excellent vehicle for active engagement of both existing and new target audiences, and are a proactive way to be ‘inspiring’ and to ‘bring alive’ museums, heritage, arts and culture – central tenets of the vision and mission of the Monmouthshire Museums Service.

As part of the Events Feasibility meetings were held with stakeholders including local businesses and local community groups, to enable them to input into the work.

5. OPTIONS APPRAISAL

| Options | Benefits | Risks | Comments |
|--|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do nothing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any concerns from some residents and businesses not realised. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduced opportunity for community groups to use grounds Lack of opportunity for us to use the grounds for income generation. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would represent a missed opportunity to increase the potential of Abergavenny Castle grounds. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue using marquees along with bringing in own infrastructure. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No permanent impact on the castle grounds | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community groups other than the largest are unable to take on the responsibilities of installing own marquees, | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The continued use of marquees requires continued revenue funding which is not readily available and |

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| | | <p>infrastructure etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued inability for the Museum Service to run events that rely entirely on dry weather unless we can guarantee enough profit to cover the cost of a marquee. | <p>so reduces our ability to run an events programme to its full potential.</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build an Outdoor Events Pavilion at Abergavenny Castle | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased opportunity to run events in all weathers. Easier for community groups to use the grounds who do not have the capacity to utilise marquees etc. Potential to obtain wedding licence and so able to offer daytime only wedding packages. Able to improve infrastructure e.g. events toilets as part of the project. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opposition from some residents and businesses. Not securing the final funding stream. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> This would represent an opportunity to increase the potential of Abergavenny Castle grounds. |

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Has there been an increase in the use of the grounds by community groups?
- Has there been an increased attendance in events?
- Has there been an increase in income generation from events?
- Has there been an increase in the diversity of events being run in the castle grounds?

7. REASONS:

7.1. Following a review of the Museums Service a Five Year Forward Plan was produced which was approved by Cabinet in December 2016. It was agreed that individual business cases from the plan would be brought forward for scrutiny as appropriate. One of the proposed business cases included reference to the currently underused open spaces of Abergavenny Castle and consideration of a permanent outdoor structure in which an annual programme of events could be developed in order to generate additional income to improve the economic sustainability of the service and to increase partnership working with local communities and businesses.

7.2. Sarah Browne Architect was appointed in July 2017 to prepare designs for the Outdoor Events Pavilion. These designs have been completed along with a Heritage Impact Assessment and a document outlining likely events that will take place in the castle grounds.

7.3. A grant of £128K was approved by the Rural Community Development Fund in June 2018.

7.4. A grant of £30K was approved by Abergavenny Town Council in October 2018.

7.5. In October 2018 we were asked to work up an expression of interest for a £120K grant from Museums, Archives and Libraries Transformation fund into a full funding application. A decision will be made in April 2019.

7.6. To meet the above criteria a planning application has been submitted in November 2018.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

We have secured:

- £128K from the Rural Community Development Fund (this is to be spent on the structure itself)
- £30K from Abergavenny Town Council (this can be spent on capital or revenue costs)
- £2500 - Aber Local History Society (for archaeological costs - already spent)
- £6650 has been spent by Museums to cover fees so far.

Museums, Archives and Libraries Division (MALD) have said they would like us to put in a Stage 2 application for their Transformation fund. We have asked for £120K. If we are successful **all costs will be covered** and the money will be spent as follows:

- £90k towards the structure itself (this means the £30K from the Town Council can be used on revenue costs)
- £30K to refurbish the old toilet block so we have events toilets.

9. CONSULTEES:

- The Nevill Estate
- CADW
- Cabinet Member for Enterprise
- Abergavenny Town Council
- Local Residents

Monmouthshire County Council Staff

Chief Officer, Enterprise, Head of Tourism, Leisure, Culture and Youth, Head of Enterprise and Community Development, Property Services, Planning Department, Conservation Officer, Environmental Health Officer, Ecology and Sustainability Officer

Local Groups and Businesses

Abergavenny Civic Society, Abergavenny Food Festival, Abergavenny Local History Society, 7 Corners Youth Centre, CAIR (Monmouthshire based Disability Support group), Abergavenny Town Team, Abergavenny Transition Town, Angel Hotel

- A wide range of key businesses and stakeholders were involved in the Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study.
- Economy and Development Select Committee - October 2017 (See below)
Committee's Conclusion:

The Committee applauded Officers for the amount of work and research which had gone into the report, however In times of fiscal restraint it was felt to be essential that as an Authority we maximise our money and obtain tangible returns.

There is a strong case in terms of community improvement and as an asset it would be a strong community enhancement as well as potentially providing long term gains.

Comfort was sought on the lease before any decision could be made and the question of what contributions could be made by Abergavenny Town Council.

It was felt at this time the Committee cannot endorse The Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study at this time as further information is required on;

- *The lease (Appendix 3)*
- *Loan structure (No longer relevant at this time)*
- *Building construction costs (Appendix 1)*

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- **Appendix One – Business Case Abergavenny Castle Events Pavilion**
- **Appendix A – Draft Designs**
- **Appendix B – Photorealistic views**
- **Appendix Two – Confirmation of grant from Abergavenny Town Council**
- **Appendix Three – Correspondence from Nevill Estate confirming intention to continue lease.**
- **Appendix Four – Projected Income Generation**
- **Appendix Five – Table of proposed types of events at Abergavenny Castle**
- **Appendix Six – Future Generations Evaluation**
- **Appendix Seven – Abergavenny Castle Events Feasibility Study**

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