

Report to:	EXECUTIVE
Relevant Officer:	Alan Cavill, Director of Place
Relevant Cabinet Member:	Councillor Simon Blackburn, Leader of the Council
Date of Meeting:	12 September 2016

WINTER GARDENS CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION CENTRE

1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To consider the authorisation of £570,000 expenditure allowing the continued engagement of appointed architects in order to further progress plans and designs for the proposed conference and exhibition centre, to the stage allowing submission of a full planning application.

2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 That £570,000 expenditure is authorised in order to allow the continued engagement of appointed architects and other professional advisers to progress the conference and exhibition centre designs to RIBA4 allowing submission of a full planning application.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

- 3.1 To progress the delivery of a fit for purpose 21st century conference centre which once delivered will allow Blackpool to compete in the economically important business tourism sector and significantly contribute toward attaining the Council vision for Blackpool of being the UK's number one family resort with a thriving economy that supports a happy and healthy community who are proud of this unique town.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options to be considered:

Delay further engagement of architects and associated professional services.

This course of action would increase the possibility of deviation from project schedule and in turn significant grant funding bids associated with the scheme being rejected, having a negative impact on the affordability of the development.

4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: “The economy: Maximising growth and opportunity across Blackpool”

5.0 Background Information

5.1 Following receipt of delegated authority allowing the Director of Places to deliver the project, a tender exercise has been undertaken in order to engage architects to progress the plans and designs of the scheme.

5.2 Expenditure of £225,000 was authorised through Cabinet Member Decision PH60/2016. This allowed the continued engagement of architects and progression of scheme plans and designs ensuring the continued adherence to the project timescales.

5.3 Authority for a further £570,000 expenditure is now sought. This will allow development of the conference centre plans and designs to the stage allowing submission of a full planning application

5.4 Dialogue has taken place with the scheme architects in respect of their continued appointment, subject to further funding being authorised as set out at 5.3 above. Agreement has been reached in this regard.

5.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

5.6 List of Appendices:

None

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 The Council’s contracting and commissioning procedures will apply. A suitable contract will be developed in consultation with the Council’s Legal Services team.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 The £570,000 expenditure for which authority is sought in this report will initially be classified as a revenue expense. Should grant funding be approved, reclassification of the £570,000 will take place and it will form part of the

Conference Centre capital expenditure.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

- 10.1 It is projected that Growth Deal 3 and Coastal Communities grant funding will contribute up to £18m of funds toward the scheme. Funding applications are currently being processed. It is anticipated that notification of progression to round two of the Coastal Communities Fund bidding process will be received early September, with further advancement in the Growth Deal 3 procedure following later this year however; grant funding is yet to be awarded. The risk that grant funding is ultimately not forthcoming has been identified.
- 10.2 Should grant funding not be awarded, the £570,000 requested will be charged to the Strategic Leisure Assets portfolio as a revenue expense. The project timescales will be realigned in order to distribute the associated cost across two financial years, as agreed with the Council's Director of Resources as Statutory Finance Officer.
- 10.3 The time constraints associated with completing the project designs and obtaining full planning approval are extremely tight. In order to minimise the risk of deviation from schedule and in turn maximise the likelihood of being awarded grant funding applied for, the Council's project team and planning department will continue to work as closely as possible with the selected firm of architects in order to meet the applicable timescales.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

- 11.1 None

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

- 12.1 Consultation has taken place with both internal departments and external consultants on the requirements set out in this report.

13.0 Background papers:

- 13.1 None

14.0 Key decision information:

- 14.1 Is this a key decision? Yes
- 14.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number: 23/2016
- 14.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No
- 14.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

15.0 Call-in information:

15.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

15.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

16.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):

Date informed: N/A

Date approved: N/A

17.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):

18.0 Executive decision:

18.2 **Date of Decision:**

19.0 Reason(s) for decision:

19.1 **Date Decision published:**

20.0 Executive Members in attendance:

21.0 Call-in:

22.0 Notes: