


Individual Cabinet Member Report – transfer of capital scheme from provisional to approved programme

Name of Cabinet Member	Councillor Pieter-Paul Barker Cabinet member for Finance and Property Assets
Delegations Checked and certified by	Andrew Busby -Head of Development and Corporate Landlord andrew.busby@southandvale.gov.uk
Name of officer requesting the decision	Lyn Russell-Project Manager for DCL
Contact details of officer	E-mail: lyn.russell@southandvale.gov.uk Mobile: 07917 088347
Details of decision required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To approve the continuation and to progress with the refurbishment works at Cornerstone Art Centre, Didcot, works to include café refurbishment and new furniture, toilet upgrade, technical upgrading new internal and external lighting, and external signage. • To approve the transfer of £405,000 for 2025/26 of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital budget programme to fund the internal works at Cornerstone Art Centre. • To create four new capital cost centres and transfer these funds into the cost centres following the split shown in Appendix Two
Recommended Action	That the Council supports the internal refurbishment works at Cornerstone Art Centre, fully funded from CIL receipts and that the budget is transferred from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital programme.

Reasons for recommended decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cornerstone Art Centre has not been upgraded since the building opened in 2008, the building now needs investment to upgrade the centre to provide a warm, welcoming environment to all that use the centre – to include the wider community. • Pre-refurbishment project work is now underway to procure via the Southeast procurement portal, for an ‘internal fit-out’ Contractor who will be able to work with the council and wider Cornerstone project team to construct works in-line with the design, within an agreed timeframe and cost. • The internal refurbishment works will include: • Café and Box Office Reconfiguration: The proposed reconfiguration aims to enhance the customer experience by increasing café seating capacity and creating a new, combined reception and café counter facing the entrance. This will improve space utilisation, streamline operations through multi-tasking (allowing staff to support both box office and café duties during peak times), and enhance commercial viability. • Toilet Refurbishment: The planned refurbishment of the toilets will improve customer satisfaction and the overall quality of the venue's facilities. • External Cosmetic Improvements: These improvements include bolder branding, enhanced external seating, and improved lighting to enhance the building's visual appeal and attract more visitors, potentially increasing revenue. • The Main Auditorium Sound and Lighting Upgrade: Upgrading selected sound and lighting equipment in the main auditorium will improve the quality of performances and the overall audience experience, contributing to customer satisfaction and potentially attracting a wider range of productions.
Financial Details	<p>Cornerstone Art Centre – South</p> <p>South Oxfordshire has allocated £405,000 for 2025/26 for the internal refurbishments required at Cornerstone Art Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project will be funded from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding, transferring funds from the provisional capital programme to the approved capital budget programme to fund the internal works at Cornerstone Art Centre.
Alternative options considered and rejected	<p>Do not commence with this project – this alternative option has been rejected as the refurbishment works identified within this document and project are required. There has been no refurbishment work or improvements at this site since the Art Centre was opened in 2008, therefore, the refurbishment works will provide a much-needed update to décor, design, equipment, along with lighting that will provide a modern and fit for purpose Art Centre.</p> <p>CIL funding is available and has been allocated in the provisional capital programme for the internal refurbishment works relating to this project.</p>

Details of background documents	N/A
Declarations / conflict of interest	Declarations of any other Cabinet Members consulted by the Cabinet Member making the decision.

Consultation (officers/ward councillors)	Section	Name	Outcome	Date
	Legal legal@southandvale.gov.uk	Pat Connell	Agreed	22.5.2025
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk	Hannah Makins	Approved	20/05/2025
	Finance Finance@southandvale.gov.uk	Mark Hewer	Confirm that £405,000 of CIL funding has been allocated to this project as part of the provisional capital programme. The proposed works are in accordance with this allocation and CIL spending regulations.	20/05/2025
	Climate and ecology climateaction@southandvale.gov.uk	Kim Hall	Climate & Biodiversity team to be consulted during procurement process	20/05/2025
	Diversity and Equality equalities@southandvale.gov.uk	Abigail Witting	Approved	20/05/2025
	Procurement Procurement@southandvale.gov.uk	Ben Watson	Agreed	19/05/2025
	Human Resources hadminandpayroll@southandvale.gov.uk	Abigail Witting	Approved	20/05/2025
	Strategic property StrategicPropertyTeam@southandvale.gov.uk	Chris Mobbs	Agreed	21/05/2025
	Health and Safety healthandsafety@southandvale.gov.uk	Louise Doughty	Agreed	19/05/2025
	Risk and insurance risk@southandvale.gov.uk	Yvonne Cutler-Greeves	Agreed	19/05/2025
	Communications communications@southandvale.gov.uk	Charlotte Westgate	Please keep in contact with comms over timings, we'll need to engage with customers, staff, councillors, the media etc over the plans and impact of any work being done	19/05/2025
Head of service's approval				10/06/2025
Cabinet Member's approval	<i>Pieter-Paul Barker</i>			12/06/2025

Appendix 1: Detailed capital scheme appraisal report

Ownership of report/ scheme	Lyn Russell E-mail: lyn.russell@southandvale.gov.uk
Details of the scheme	<p>The internal refurbishment works will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café and Box Office Reconfiguration: The proposed reconfiguration aims to enhance the customer experience by increasing café seating capacity and creating a new, combined reception and café counter facing the entrance. This will improve space utilisation, streamline operations through multi-tasking (allowing staff to support both box office and café duties during peak times), and enhance commercial viability. • Toilet Refurbishment: The planned refurbishment of the toilets will improve customer satisfaction and the overall quality of the venue's facilities. • External Cosmetic Improvements: These improvements include bolder branding, enhanced external seating, and improved lighting to enhance the building's visual appeal and attract more visitors, potentially increasing revenue. • The Main Auditorium Sound and Lighting Upgrade: Upgrading selected sound and lighting equipment in the main auditorium will improve the quality of performances and the overall audience experience, contributing to customer satisfaction and potentially attracting a wider range of productions. <p>The scheme will not be carried out with any other organisation or local authorities</p> <p>Project Management</p> <p>The project will be managed in-house/client side by Lyn Russell, Project Manager, DCL, Property Operations.</p> <p>External Project Management will be provided by Allens Construction Consultancy Ltd., who will manage the Employers Requirements, CDM. Once the internal refurbishment work has been tendered, then the 'fit-out' Contractor will take on the design works, fit-out along PC CDM 2015.</p> <p>Timescales</p> <p>The refurbishment works are anticipated to start during August 2025, exact dates to be confirmed with fit-out Contractor, service area, and site.</p> <p>Practical Completion (PC) is expected to be during end August – early September 2025.</p>

Strategic objectives	<p>The internal refurbishment works at Cornerstone Art Centre will link to the councils' priorities and strategic themes by contributing to thriving, health and inclusive communities as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance public health: By linking into the proposed Culture, Heritage, and Creative Industry Strategy (CHCI) aims to improve public health by fostering a positive feeling and pride of place while supporting initiatives that promote physical and mental well-being. This includes facilitating access to a diverse range of activities and events and fostering the creation of safe and welcoming spaces where people can socialise and connect, positively impacting mental health. Strengthen community engagement and inclusion: The proposed CHCI strategy seeks to be a catalyst for stronger community engagement and sense of ownership with greater inclusion, by supporting a wide array of activities and events accessible to people of all ages and backgrounds. It will also encourage collaborations with community partners to deliver inclusive programs and services across the districts. Promote sustainable economic development: The proposed strategy will recognise the significant role of the CHCI and will support and encourage a mixed economy of public, private and voluntary sector working together as a single eco-system of collaboration, learning and high performance. By supporting and developing these sectors, the strategy will aim to attract people to town centres and contribute to economic vitality. It will also provide affordable venues and resources for community groups, businesses, and residents to undertake income-generating activities. It will also assist with supporting the sector to share skills and knowledge to reduce the digital divide and use of the worldwide opportunities that exist in a modern society to showcase our talent and creative brilliance on a national and international platform. Create safe and clean environments: A key principle of the proposed strategy will be to promote safe and welcoming environments for all participants and audiences within the CHCI. Furthermore, linking to the proposed strategy will encourage and support initiatives that reduce environmental impact, such as promoting recycling and energy efficiency within cultural venues and activities, aligning with broader sustainability goals. The refurbishment works will provide a safe, warm and welcoming environments for all that use the facility – to include the wider community.
Purpose of the scheme	<p>CIL funded building improvement proposals: A total of £405,000 in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding is proposed for building improvements. The Arts Centre has not undergone significant investment since its opening in 2008.</p>

	<p>CIL fund will provide agreed refurbishment works that will provide the investment required that will improve the facilities within the Art Centre.</p> <p>The other option considers has been to: Do not commence with this project – this alternative option has been rejected as the refurbishment works identified within this document and project are required. There has been no refurbishment work or improvements at this site since the Art Centre was opened in 2008, therefore, the refurbishment works will provide a much-needed update to décor, design, equipment, along with lighting that will provide a modern and fit for purpose Art Centre.</p> <p>The required refurbishment works at Cornerstone Art Centre will be tendered in order to select a Contractor who will work with the council to provide the specified specialist works at this site, they will provide the design, installation along with health & safety, as these works cannot be achieved any other way.</p>
Benefits of the Scheme	<p>The specific proposals included will provide the following benefits to the service and all that use the Art Centre:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Café and Box Office Reconfiguration: The proposed reconfiguration aims to enhance the customer experience by increasing café seating capacity and creating a new, combined reception and café counter facing the entrance. This will improve space utilisation, streamline operations through multi-tasking (allowing staff to support both box office and café duties during peak times), and enhance commercial viability. • Toilet Refurbishment: The planned refurbishment of the toilets will improve customer satisfaction and the overall quality of the venue's facilities. • External Cosmetic Improvements: These improvements include bolder branding, enhanced external seating, and improved lighting to enhance the building's visual appeal and attract more visitors, potentially increasing revenue. • Main Auditorium Sound and Lighting Upgrade: Upgrading selected sound and lighting equipment in the main auditorium will improve the quality of performances and the overall audience experience, contributing to customer satisfaction and potentially attracting a wider range of productions.
Measuring the success of the scheme	<p>All successful projects are monitored against the original aims and objectives to ensure that they have been delivered to an acceptable high standard.</p>
Financial details	<p>Financial details are shown in appendix 2</p> <p>CIL funded building improvement proposals: A total of £405,000 in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding is</p>

	proposed for building improvements. The Arts Centre has not undergone significant investment since its opening in 2008.
Hurdles to be overcome	The refurbishment works will mainly involve internal works; however, planning approval will be sought for the external lighting elements of this project.

Appendix 2: Financial details

The capital cost of the scheme	CIL funded building improvement proposals: A total of £405,000 in Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding is proposed for building improvements.		
The profile of that expenditure	The CIL funding has been profiled to fund the following activities:		
	Allocated to	Total Budget £000	Comments
	Technical Improvements	50	Allocated to lighting, tech upgrades
	Signage – External	30	External signage
	Capital Improvements	245	Café, furniture, toilet refurbishments,
	Toilet Works	80	Where required
	Total	405	
	Variances to the split of this funding is acceptable but will first be agreed with the infrastructure obligations team.		
The revenue consequences of the scheme (expenditure and income)	The refurbishments to Cornerstone Art Centre are material and aesthetic in nature, therefore there will be no revenue consequences to this scheme.		
Details of any specific sources of external finance available for this scheme	Funding via CIL which is collected from developers for provision or enhancement of infrastructure to support growth in the area.		
Any VAT implications of the scheme	None.		
Any financial risks associated with the scheme	None.		
Details of any financial return on the investment	Due to the enhancement of the facility, this will make the venue more attractive and increase sale of food and beverage in the café area.		