Green light for Tamworth Assembly Rooms



Tamworth Assembly Halls

The announcement that the £900k bid had succeeded at the second stage of the HLF bid means that all external funding needed for the Tamworth Assembly Rooms regeneration project is now in place. It is proposed that Tamworth Borough Council will allocate a total of £900,000 in match funding, with Staffordshire County Council contributing £550,000 on top of the £903,400 from HLF.

Now that the project has been given the green light, it is expected that work will start in early 2016. No bookings for Tamworth Assembly Rooms will be taken after February 2016 and it is expected that the venue will be closed for around 18 months.

All groups which currently use Tamworth Assembly Rooms will be given full support during the closure and will be found alternative accommodation. They will also continue to receive marketing, front of house and technical support.

The regeneration of Tamworth Assembly Rooms is the first stage in the ambitious £5.5million project to develop a Creative Quarter in the heart of Tamworth town centre. Earlier this year, the project – led by Tamworth Borough Council and Staffordshire County Council - was awarded £2.95million from the Single Local Growth Fund.

The development of the Creative Quarter will include the refurbishment and extension of Tamworth Assembly Rooms, the transformation of the Philip Dix Centre into a Business and Enterprise Centre, the redevelopment of the Carnegie Centre as a restaurant and improvements to the library and surrounding area.

The project will create around 100 jobs and attract additional private investment. In independent economic impact assessment which was carried out ahead of the funding bid showed that the development of a Creative Quarter could potentially add £13million to the town's economy by 2019.

Reyahn King, Head of HLF West Midlands, said: "Tamworth Assembly Rooms have acted as a stage for Tamworth life for more than 125 years. Thanks to those people who play the National Lottery, we're delighted to support this project which will restore the building for the 21st century as an important first step for Tamworth's Creative Quarter and ensure its historic elements and the stories it holds are preserved for future generations to enjoy."

Now that all external funding has been secured, the provisional timetable and work programme involves:

- Tamworth Assembly Rooms closing for refurbishment in February 2016. Groups which use the building will continue to be supported and the arts & events programme will continue at other venues in the borough. The refurbishment is expected to be completed by 2017/18
- The creation of a Business Enterprise Centre at the Philip Dix Centre will be undertaken in 2018/19. These works will include the demolition of the former toilet block in Aldergate to create additional parking, as well as the demolition of the kiosk
- The works on the conversion of the Carnegie Centre into a restaurant are expected to start in 2017/18
- Throughout the entire process, Tamworth Borough Council will continue to work with and provide support to the tenants and hirers of the Philip Dix and Carnegie Centres, keeping them informed of the progress of the project and helping them to secure alternative accommodation
- Alterations to Tamworth Library and the creation of a new public open space (to be led by Staffordshire County Council). A planning application is expected to be submitted later this year, to dovetail with the works to Tamworth Assembly Rooms

Cllr Steve Claymore, Cabinet member for Economy & Education, said: "The awarding of £900,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund is the final external funding grant needed to allow us to move forward with this exciting project which will completely transform this part of Tamworth. Everyone involved with this project is delighted by the news that we have secured this funding, particularly as we has to delay our bid last year.

"This project is a classic example of how this council collaborates and works with others who share our vision and passion for improving the town and building upon all the great things it already has to offer. The regeneration of Tamworth Assembly Rooms and the wider Creative Quarter project will have a major positive impact on our town centre for businesses, visitors and residents by encouraging new and small businesses to operate in the town centre and attracting additional visitors. It will also allow us to secure the future of Tamworth Assembly Rooms, to ensure that it continues to welcome and serve audiences for generations to come."

Further information

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