

**REPORT TO: WEST OF ENGLAND COMBINED AUTHORITY
COMMITTEE**

DATE: 8th APRIL 2022

REPORT TITLE: THE COURTS FULL BUSINESS CASE

**DIRECTOR: STEPHEN BASHFORD, DIRECTOR OF BUSINESS
AND SKILLS**

Purpose of Report

- 1 To present the Full Business Case for The Courts and seek approval of £757,608 towards the project

Impact of Covid-19 pandemic

The Combined Authority has actively reviewed its key activities and work programme to reflect changing priorities as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Specific issues relating to the Covid-19 situation that impact on or are addressed through this report are as follows:

- As set out in detail in the Business Case, The Courts project will support the inclusion of one of the region's most impacted groups – young people from disadvantaged or under-represented backgrounds, who have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic

Recommendation

- **Approve the Full Business Case for The Courts and award £757,608 funding towards the total project costs of £6,383,549 with match funding from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and other sources.**

Background / Issues for Consideration

- 2 The recently published West of England Cultural Plan¹ sets out to create a region which is *an international exemplar of the power of culture to transform and enrich lives, places and businesses*. It identifies four areas of focus and cross-cutting themes to amplify and support world-class culture and creativity

¹ [West of England Cultural Plan \(westofengland-ca.gov.uk\)](https://www.westofengland-ca.gov.uk/cultural-plan)

across the West of England – ‘Cultural and Creative Skills’, ‘Creative Freelancers, SMEs and start-ups’, ‘Placemaking’ and ‘Wellbeing’.

- 3 The Courts project, aligning with the strategic direction set by the Plan, is a youth-skills development that binds key clean and inclusive recovery principles:
 - Skills development for disadvantaged or marginalised young people whose abilities merit careers in the creative industries – particularly those impacted by the pandemic.
 - A more diverse employment base for the region’s creative sector, one of our fastest growing industries, helping it better reflect the populations it serves
 - New life for a derelict Victorian building, refurbished to provide training, employment, business success and playing a part in rejuvenating business and culture in the city centre.

- 4 Employment in the creative industries does not represent the diverse communities of Bristol and the wider West of England region. For young people with the talent but not the networks, educational attainment, personal wealth or other advantages, the barriers are almost impossible to overcome, and many do not have the chance to achieve their potential. This has been exacerbated by the pandemic. Covid-19 has added digital poverty, isolation, unemployment, increased responsibility at home, depleting mental health and diminished opportunity. There is a danger diversifying the creative industries will lose momentum, young people left further behind. The Courts will match young people’s talent and potential to creative industry opportunities:
 - The training to take their talent to the level where they can secure employment or start their own creative business.
 - The networks young people need to identify opportunities, build their experience and develop contacts for the future.
 - The space to experiment, develop ideas, create, produce and showcase their work.
 - Wellbeing support and mentoring to help them overcome the barriers they face.
 - Financial support through free-to-use space, and training and mentorship.

- 5 With three converted courtrooms, offices, and other working spaces and meeting rooms, The Courts will be an inclusive enterprise hub for new creative voices, new attitudes, new ideas. Young people will be supported by Creative Youth Network staff and tenants of The Courts – creative professionals and enterprises whose tenancy conditions will oblige mentoring, work placements and internships. Each year, The Courts will deliver:
 - Skills training opportunities for 500 16-25 year old emerging young

creatives from disadvantaged backgrounds in Bristol and the surrounding region.

- Supported enterprise spaces for up to 50 young people setting up their own businesses.
 - Paid internship opportunities for 30 young people
 - Pathways into the creative sector for young talent
 - New space for 110 workers from creative industry businesses
 - £3.77m GVA for the West of England region in year 1 and £7.34m annually thereafter.
- 6 The Courts development is ready to start. Reaching RIBA Stage 4 and contractor procurement, The Courts development can be underway as soon as June 2022, subject only to reaching its final financial goal through this grant award – with the building opening as early as summer 2023. Managed by Creative Youth Network, the West of England’s largest youth charity, with experience of managing large capital developments of this kind, keeping them on time and on budget. This is a unique opportunity to support young people through the Covid recovery period and give them the opportunities they need to thrive.
- 7 This project will follow the delivery assurance ‘use it or lose it’ principles as set out in the Delivery Assurance Report on this agenda, subject to that reports approval.

Consultation

- 8 Details on the level of engagement and consultation are set out in the Full Business Case.

Other Options Considered

- 9 A full options appraisal is included in the Full Business Case.

Risk Management/Assessment

- 10 This is set out in detail in the Business Case ‘Management case’

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 11 The public sector equality duty created under the Equality Act 2010 means that public authorities must have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 11.1 The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

11.2 The general equality duty therefore requires organisations to consider how they could positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations. It requires equality considerations to be reflected in the design of policies and the delivery of services, including policies, and for these issues to be kept under review.

11.3 An Equality and Diversity Impact Assessment is included as part of the Business Case.

Finance Implications, including economic impact assessment where appropriate:

11 Total Spend – Capital and Revenue

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
NLHF	150,000	4,100,300	0	0	4,250,300
Other match	153,000	917,000	0	0	1,070,000
WECA	0	757,608	0	0	757,608
Creative Youth Network	0	42,439	172,132	91,070	305,641
Total	303,000	5,817,347	172,132	91,070	6,383,549

Advice given by: Richard Ennis, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services

Legal Implications:

12 None

Advice given by: Stephen Gerrard, Interim Director of Law and Democratic Services

Climate Change Implications

13 On 19 July 2019, the West of England Combined Authority declared a climate emergency, recognising the huge significance of climate change and its impact on the health, safety and wellbeing of the region’s residents. The Combined Authority is committed to taking climate change considerations fully

into account as an integral part of its governance and decision making process.

Each report/proposal submitted for Combined Authority / Joint Committee approval is assessed in terms of the following:

Will the proposal impact positively or negatively on:

- * The emission of climate changing gases?
- * The region's resilience to the effects of climate change?
- * Consumption of non-renewable resources?
- * Pollution to land, water or air?

Particular projects will also be subject to more detailed environmental assessment/consideration as necessary as part of their detailed project-specific management arrangements

13.1 Full Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Considerations are included in the Business Case.

Land/property Implications

14 None

Advice given by: Richard Ennis, Interim Director of Investment and Corporate Services

Human Resources Implications:

15 None

Advice given by: Alex Holly, Head of People and Assets

Appendices:

Full Business Case [The Courts](#)

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