Finance and Resources Committee

10.00am, Thursday, 14 March 2024

South Bridge Resource Centre, 6 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh – Proposed Lease

Executive/routineRoutineWards11- City Centre

1. Recommendations

- 1.1 That Finance and Resources Committee:
 - 1.1.1 Notes the ongoing work to progress with the relocation of activities from South Bridge Resource Centre;
 - 1.1.2 Notes that, for the majority of groups and classes using the building, suitable alternative locations have been identified and that engagement has commenced to implement the proposed moves;
 - 1.1.2 Notes the ongoing engagement with Canongate Youth by both the Council and Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society; and
 - 1.1.3 Approves the long lease to Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society on the terms and conditions set out in the report.

Paul Lawrence

Executive Director of Place

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Report

South Bridge Resource Centre, 6 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh – Proposed Lease

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 On 25 April 2023, Finance and Resources Committee approved entering into formal discussions with Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society (EFFS) for a long-term lease of South Bridge Resource Centre.
- 2.2 In preparation that a decision to award a long-term lease may be agreed, officers have undertaken analysis of current building users and employees based there. A range of alternative venues has been identified and plans and costs to relocate user groups, classes and employees, empty the building and provide vacant possession have been drafted. These plans continue to be refined and updated.
- 2.3 This report asks Committee to note the wider deterioration of the building fabric; note that relocation options have been identified and engagement commenced; note the progress and further information on the proposals by EFFS on the development of a Community and Festival Hub; and approve the main terms of conditions for a lease to EFFS.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 25 April 2023, Finance and Resources Committee considered a <u>report</u> on the future of South Bridge Resource Centre. The report explained that the main use of the building was to provide accommodation for adult learning but that it required capital investment £1.13m (2019) in the short term, which is unbudgeted for in the Council's capital investment strategy. The need for a strategy to preserve and sustain the building moving forward resulted in an offer to lease the building by EFFS who had secured funds to deliver a Community and Festival Hub. Committee approved the following recommendations, as amended:
 - 3.1.1 Approves entering into formal discussions with the EFFS for a long lease of the South Bridge Resource Centre;
 - 3.1.2 Notes that the proposals will include solutions for current occupiers (Canongate Youth) and other services (Adult Education classes);
 - 3.1.3 Agrees that as part of this process direct discussion should take place between CEC and Canongate Youth, and care taken to identify any

agreements in place between building tenants/users and third parties which may be affected by any lease change; and

- 3.1.4 Notes that a further report will be submitted to Committee once the next stage of due diligence is complete. The report should include a comprehensive survey of activities already being delivered within the venue.
- 3.2 This report asks Committee to note the wider deterioration of the building fabric; note that relocation options have been identified and engagement commenced; note the progress and further information on the proposals by EFFS on the development of a Community and Festival Hub; and approve the main terms of conditions for a lease to EFFS.

4. Main report

Building Existing Users

- 4.1 A Cross-Directorate Oversight Group meets weekly to progress and co-ordinate the actions required to achieve vacant possession. As such, significant work has been undertaken to determine user levels within the building and to identify alternative locations for future provision.
- 4.2 Appendix 1 provides a summary of the current estimated usage of South Bridge Resource Centre.

Adult Education Classes

- 4.3 The majority of users attend the building for adult education classes, which total up to 80 classes a week during term time. Analysis of information available indicates that the majority travel to the building from across Edinburgh, with the main home locations being postcodes EH10 and EH9 followed by EH12 and EH4. Groups and classes using the building include English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and literacy classes.
- 4.4 All these classes can be relocated to locations principally within the wider education estate including schools and community centres and a range of alternative venues has been identified.
- 4.5 Plans and costs to relocate groups and employees, empty the building and provide vacant possession of South Bridge Resource Centre have commenced and due diligence is ongoing. Costs are not expected to be high given the existing condition of receiving buildings (i.e., in most cases it will involve a change of location however there will be some essential one-off costs to ensure the spaces are fit for purpose). It is intended that Waverley Court will be one of the main receiving buildings.
- 4.6 Initial engagement has commenced with groups, such as the Adult Learner Forum, to ensure that any transition is clearly understood and that all issues are captured and addressed as part of the transition process. The Forum has shared their initial thoughts on future requirements and, subject to approval of the recommendations in this report, detailed engagement with all users will continue to develop to ensure all

new arrangements are suitable for everyone. This engagement will also inform the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process as details are worked through.

Council Teams Based in South Bridge Resource Centre

4.7 The Adult and Family Learning, ESOL and Business Support teams currently working from South Bridge can potentially be re-located to Waverley Court. Facilities Management (FM) support currently provided at South Bridge can be re-deployed by the service to meet any additional cleaning requirements in venues where activities are relocated to. Trade Unions have been offered briefings on the proposals.

Canongate Youth

4.8 As reported in April 2023, Canongate Youth currently occupy the upper floors of the building and will continue to be accommodated as tenants in the building following the lease to EFFS. EFFS has also indicated a viable solution for partner projects - Totally Sound and Reel Youth Media - which is in development with these groups. Final solutions are currently being worked on between Canongate Youth and EFFS and this will form part of the lease agreement from the Council to EFFS.

Pottery Classes

4.9 The main challenge is the relocation of the Adult Learning pottery classes as this requires specialist space in the form of a pottery studio with kilns. A number of options (principally Council owned artist studio space) have been identified and due diligence is continuing to identify the most suitable option. The Pottery Users Group (PUG) is a long-standing user of the pottery workshop facility. PUG's access to the pottery studio is structured around the Adult Learning pottery classes. For this, PUG pays £3,000 per annum towards the cost of the facilities. It is intended that the PUG use will continue once the new studio space is delivered as part of the relocation proposals and the Council will continue to meet regularly to jointly facilitate finding a solution, including work to develop PUG's capacity as a charitable organisation.

Building Condition

- 4.10 South Bridge Resource Centre is a Grade B listed former school building that was originally constructed in 1885. It is unique in the context that it is the only building that is principally for adult education delivery, as the majority of services are typically run from other Education establishments (such as schools and community centres).
- 4.11 The high-level details on the building condition were contained in a <u>report</u> to Committee on 5 March 2020 (Community Centres Condition Review). The report noted that the risk profile of closure will increase with each passing year there is no investment, to a point when the risk becomes unsustainable and a decision will need to be made on the asset risk from options including: tolerate, transfer, treat or terminate.

- 4.12 As highlighted in the report to Committee on 23 April 2023, the building requires significant work to upgrade its condition and a condition report, carried out in 2019, identified £1.13m of works for which there is no allocated budget.
- 4.13 However, the condition survey report was updated in 2023. The salient information from that report estimated that the cost of necessary works had risen to £1.974m, with the main expenditure relating to the mechanical and electrical services. Of particular concern is the observation that the major items of mechanical plant in the main building are, or will soon become, beyond their expected useful efficient life span and will require to be replaced within one and three years. Overall, the building is rated to be in "C" condition (Poor- showing major defects and/or not operating adequately) albeit some elements are rated "D" condition (Bad economic life expired and/or risk of failure).
- 4.14 The Council condition reports are produced in a manner required by the Scottish Government and reflect like for like replacement costs. They do not include additionality costs for measures such as suitability or sustainability.
- 4.15 In summary, the risk profile of the building is increasing due to deterioration of the fabric over time. Without intervention, the building will eventually close and, in the context of the wider report, the solution is to transfer to save the property and retain it for public use.

EFFS Proposals

- 4.16 EFFS' aspiration is to create a year-round Community and Festival Hub funded from an award of up to £7m from the UK Government. The investment will completely refurbish and modernise the building. Appendix 2 contains details of the proposals with highlights including:
 - 4.16.1 Public facing Home of the Fringe (year-round and during the Festival) to offer support and services to artists, citizens and visitors and tell the story of the Fringe.
 - Reclaiming green space publicly accessible garden for community and local use;
 - Working space for performing arts professionals with access to EFFS services and support;
 - Archive and public gallery to share the story of the Fringe and support research.
 - 4.16.2 Fully Accessible Building:
 - Installation of a new lift to enable level access throughout the building;
 - Changing places and toilets publicly accessible;
 - Ramp and external work for level access;
 - 4.16.3 Sustainable and Future Proof
 - Thermal improvements to roof, walls and ceilings;
 - New heritage appropriate windows;
 - Removal of gas boiler and installation of air source heat pumps;
 - Future proofed to allow for future local energy network potential; and

- Complete replacement of lights, heating, IT network, etc. to most energy efficient options.
- 4.17 EFFS has undertaken a number of technical and intrusive surveys within the building to inform the proposed investment, including the engagement of professional project managers. An outline business case was submitted to the UK Government in October 2023 and a further business case in January 2024. Following a recent presentation by EFFS to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), it is now critical that the terms and conditions for the transfer of the property are considered and approved by Committee.
- 4.18 While the work to relocate the service provision is ongoing, broad heads of terms have been agreed should the long lease of the property be approved. The principal terms are as follows:
 - 4.18.1 Premises: South Bridge Resource Centre, 6 Infirmary Street, Edinburgh;
 - 4.18.2 Tenant: Edinburgh Festival Fringe Society;
 - 4.18.3 Sub tenant: Canongate Youth
 - 4.18.4 Term: 99 years from date of entry;
 - 4.18.5 Rent: £1 per annum;
 - 4.18.6 Break option: the tenant has a break option at five yearly intervals on serving not less than 12 months written notice;
 - 4.18.7 Use: a cultural, community and creative industries venue. In addition, ancillary office accommodation, public rooms, hospitality and catering services and facilities;
 - 4.18.8 Repair: subject to survey reports and the Schedule of Condition, the tenant will accept a full repairing and maintaining liability for the property;
 - 4.18.9 Insurance: The Council will insure the property and recover the premium from the tenant;
 - 4.18.10 Conditions:
 - Reasonable costs of Council reprovision of the existing adult education and other Council services using the building will be met by EFFS, subject to prior agreement;
 - UK government funding approval;
 - EFFS Board approval; and
 - Canongate Youth (and affiliated groups) are to remain within the property as a sub tenant.

Conclusions

4.19 The deteriorating condition of the building means that, without any intervention, the building will close, most likely without warning. This would, in turn, create the need for an urgent reactive response to relocate services. Irrespective of the proposals

from EFFS, which will preserve the building and retain it for public use, it would still be prudent to proceed with engagement and plan for relocation.

- 4.20 The most sensitive element of the proposals is the relocation of existing users to suitable alternative accommodation and this will be the main focus moving forward. To mitigate risk, the Council will engage with users and seek to agree and co-design alternative accommodation. This is already ongoing, but some users consider that full engagement should not happen until the Council has made the actual decision to proceed with the EFFS proposal.
- 4.21 The current situation has created interdependencies that make detailed and meaningful engagement contingent on Committee agreeing to the terms and conditions for lease of the asset. For this reason, the recommendation to proceed with the EFFS proposal is based on the assumption that the Council has found suitable alternative accommodation for existing users and that the engagement process will ensure that these locations are co-designed as direct replacement for the facilities at Northbridge.

5. Next Steps

- 5.1 Should Committee approve the recommendations in this report:
 - 5.1.1 Council officers will seek to complete the work to relocate the adult learning service for the start of the 2024/25 academic year;
 - 5.1.2 Engagement will continue with all users, including the PUG, to ensure that the transition is smooth as possible;
 - 5.13 Further engagement will be co-designed with adult learners and staff, whose feedback around specific venues and needs will feed into the IIA;
 - 5.1.4 Council employees affected by the changes will be kept updated. Trade Unions will also be updated on changes to employee locations. Briefings have been offered to the Trade Unions on the arrangements set out in this report. Casual adult learning tutors will be included in engagement sessions; and
 - 5.1.5 Council solicitors will be instructed to prepare the lease documentation.

6. Financial impact

- 6.1 The cost for like-for like repairs required to the building has risen to £1.974m, for which there is no current allocation within the Sustainable Capital Strategy. Current running costs for the building are £176,000 per annum.
- 6.2 EFFS have secured up to £7m from the UK Government's capital investment fund. The proposal would see this used to completely refurbish the building with the asset leased to EFFS on a long-term basis at a peppercorn rent, with Canongate Youth remaining in situ as a sub tenant.

- 6.3 Similar agreements have been put in place for other Council assets. For example, Edinburgh Printmakers took a long-term lease of the former North British Rubber Company building at Fountainbridge at a nominal rent prior to renovating the property at a cost in excess of £14m and Riddle's Court was transferred to Scottish Historic Buildings Trust, who had secured £7m of lottery funding to save the building.
- 6.4 The market value of the asset in its current condition, with full vacant possession, is considered to be in the region of £1m. The market value with a special assumption that Canongate Youth remaining in situ, is considerably less.
- 6.5 A lease to EFFS would represent an efficiency saving in capital due to the Council not having to source future repair costs and revenue (running costs). These net savings would contribute to the property rationalisation work stream.
- 6.6 One off costs required to achieve vacant possession and to relocate groups to suitable alternative venues will be met from EFFS, as per the proposed heads of terms.
- 6.7 The proposed lease has also been considered in relation to The Disposal of Land by Local Authorities (Scotland) Regulations 2010, which provides that where the disposal (or lease) is for a consideration less than the best that can reasonably be obtained, a Local Authority can dispose of the asset, provided it follows certain steps:
 - 6.7.1 It appraises and compares the costs and dis-benefits of the proposal with the benefits;
 - 6.7.2 It satisfies itself the proposed consideration for the disposal in question is reasonable; and
 - 6.7.3 It determines that the disposal is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of any one of: economic development or regeneration, health, social well-being, or environmental well-being, of the whole or any part of the area of the local authority or any person in the local authority area.
- 6.8 It is considered that the proposals outlined in this report align with Council commitments and contribute to these criteria, therefore a proposed discount is justifiable and acceptable in this instance.

7. Equality and Poverty Impact

- 7.1 Due to the varied nature of current users at Southbridge Resource Centre, it is important to ensure that any new arrangements for the delivery of adult education do not create any negative impacts for any user groups. This will be a focus of the ongoing engagement with users if the recommendations in this report be approved and the transition is then implemented.
- 7.2 This engagement work is part of the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process, which is being led by the Cross Directorate Oversight Group. As part of the process, on conclusion of all the necessary engagement work and at the point when all the

final arrangements for future delivery are agreed, the impact on different population groups will be fully assessed and documented.

7.3.1 The IIA is being prepared based on the information and views already gathered. Three further IIA meetings are in the diary and include employee representatives, tutors and learners. Further planned engagement with employees and learner groups will help inform this IIA process, with the specific detail and impacts being analysed and mitigated where possible.

8 Climate and Nature Emergency Implications

- 8.1 The proposed works being undertaken by EFFS will seek to reduce the carbon footprint and significantly improve the environmental sustainability of the building. The aspiration is similar to the Council retrofitting programme to Passivhaus retrofit standard. This includes proposals to convert the gas boiler to air source heat pumps, plus significant fabric intervention (such as new windows and insultation improvements). It is estimated that the carbon footprint of the building will reduce by up to 90%.
- 8.2 The proposals include the greening of much of the existing car park (former school playground) by way of decking with planters to create an outdoor garden setting seating area which would be available for public use.

9. Risk, policy, compliance, governance and community impact

- 9.1 Ward members have been aware of the recommendations of this report.
- 9.2 If not addressed, there is a risk that the deterioration of the building will force it to close. The investment by EFFS will ensure that these matters are addressed and will give the building a sustainable future.
- 9.3 There is a risk that all existing users of the building will not be found suitable alternative accommodation. This risk is, and will continue to be, mitigated by space planning the Council's operational estate to ensure that all user groups are found a suitable alternative. Proactive engagement with all building users will continue. In addition, the proposals envisage that three main user groups will continue to use the building once refurbished.
- 9.4 There is a risk that delaying a decision could result in the DCMS withdrawing the funds and Edinburgh (and the building) would lose much needed investment. This could also lead to additional private investors (including trusts and foundations, donors etc) withdrawing funding offers/don't invest. This is mitigated by seeking a decision from this report.
- 9.5 Relocating the groups and classes into other venues could open up opportunities in local areas for adults within the community who are not currently accessing adult learning.

10. Background reading/external references

10.1 None.

11. Appendices

- 11.1 Appendix 1 South Bridge Resource Centre current estimated usage.
- 11.2 Appendix 2 EFFS Proposals.

SOUTH BRIDGE RESOURCE CENTRE CURRENT ESTIMATED USAGE

						Total	Estimated
			Adult Literacies		Other Classes	Number of	Number of Adult
	AEP Classes	ESOL Classes	and CBAL Classes	Outlook Classes	and Bookings**	Classes	Learners*
Monday	12	4	2	0		18	216
Tuesday	13	6	0	2		21	252
Wednesday	9	4	4	2		19	228
Thursday	9	3	0	0	2	14	168
Friday	6	1	0	0	8	15	180
Saturday	0	2	0	0	6	7	84
Total estimated number of weekly participating adult learners							1128
* This has been calculated on the basis of all classes having participation of 12 adults per activity							
** This categor	** This category includes Totally Sound/Reel Youth Media, Pottery Users Group and external bookings.						





Ambition:

To create a flexible, functional and accessible space to bring artists, residents, community groups and the Fringe community together.

Values:

Accessible, sustainable, open, added value, positive impact, dynamic service, collaboration, local.

Objectives.



- To embed the Fringe and the Fringe Society within the community of Edinburgh, with Canongate Youth as permanent tenant, and offer affordable tenancy and working space for local community groups, grassroots organisations and individual artists and creatives to ensure the performing arts community of Edinburgh benefits from the Fringe.
- 2 To modernise and broaden the services offered by the Fringe Society to artists, audiences and residents, both during the Fringe and year-round, focused on supporting disadvantaged and marginalised artists and citizens to maximise the opportunities presented by the Fringe and grow the diversity of audiences and artists.



To provide a permanent, accessible and inclusive home for the Fringe Society, offering long-term operational security in service to the Fringe, cost savings, decarbonisation, and improvements for disabled service users.







A new home – why?



- Current premises no longer fit for purpose
- Limited year-round engagement and delivery possible
 - limits local sector development
- UK Gov up to £7Mn Capital
- South Bridge Resource Centre
 - In need of urgent repair
 - In the heart of the Old Town
 - Existing Canongate Youth partnership
- Tell the history of the Fringe and its home in Edinburgh

EFFS service delivery - 2023.

- Number of registered shows: 3,553
- % of shows from UK: 45% Eng; 27% Scot; 1.5% Wal/NI
- Number of shows from Edinburgh: 601
- Number of shows classified as professional: 1,929
- Number of premieres: 1,539
- Number of venues: 288
- Number of international showcases: 17
- Number of countries presenting work: 67
- Number of Street Performers: 500
- Accredited Arts Industry: 1,395 from 50 countries
- Accredited Media: 840



Audiences

Location	2023		
Edinburgh	35%		
Rest of Scotland	16%		
Rest of UK	37%		
International	12%		

Access and Community Engagement 2023.



- 32 Edinburgh charity and community groups, over **16,000 people since 2017**.
- 2023: Fringe@ events with Sikh Sanjog, Stepping Stones and Broomhouse; 1,800 attendees in local Edinburgh communities, plus 8 community groups matched with artists, reaching 456 people.
- 300 sensory resources distributed throughout August, 35% increase in engagement with access booking services, and 1,300 enhanced performances for D/Deaf and disabled community.
- Wellbeing at Work bus in partnership with SAMH engaged with more than 250 people at the Fringe Street Events.

Benefits.



"The Fringe Community Hub will secure the long term sustainability of the Fringe Society and their services and operations, as well as provide the opportunity for an enhanced offer. Providing a space for artists to work together will reduce barriers to networks being created, resulting in agglomeration benefits and innovation as a result of knowledge sharing from working in a shared space. These networks are difficult to build and maintain individually, but can have significant benefits for small organisations and freelancers through collaboration and the exchange of ideas with their peers." DCMS Analyst

"there was also a cautious welcome for the opportunities which might flow from having a year-round space dedicated to Edinburgh's local artists. Not only does this extend the offer and take pressure off venues unable to meet demand (due to capacity, supply or financial constraints), but also, for many independent artists who feel disenfranchised from Edinburgh's cultural institutions, including from the Fringe Festival, such a space has the potential to create a tangible community of value and belonging." EPAD Research

Infirmary St.





Benefits.

- Accessible building works ramps, lift, Changing Places
- Extensive insulation improvements, including new
 Heritage appropriate windows
- New electric air sourced heating pump
- Additional 3 event spaces for Fringe Central delivery
- Co-working space for Edinburgh artist community
 (min 10 desks)
- Flexible event and studio space for hire, 4 spaces,
 capacity of approx 40 per room, flexible space allows up to 180ppl
- Catering and **kitchen** spaces (currently zero)
- Reclamation of green space for public use
- Building, including **toilets, open to the public**

- Increased in-festival delivery capacity for EFFS.
- New delivery capacity of EFFS **year-round**.
- **Cost efficiencies** annual savings of approx. £75K on external room hire.
- New service and support for Fringe and local artists, including co-working space, low-cost room hire.
- Fully accessible Fringe Society Services, including **Changing Places**
- Production of an archive space that supports research and general interest/engagement with the history of the Fringe, open to the public.
- Significant **reduction in carbon footprint** of the Fringe Society's premises.



Accessibility.

There will be a focus on ensuring the building is **fully accessible** for both Fringe Society staff and those that will use the building. Upgrades will include ramps, lift and level access, and Changing Places facilities

Heritage approved Full size lift Improved wheelchair access: internal & external

Changing Places, with 24/7 access









Sustainability.

Energy and Carbon Strategy

Operational Energy and Carbon Emissions Assessment

Benchmark Baseline (No energy consumption improvements)

		• • • • •				
TOTAL	467,400	£61,598.00	73,644			
Gas (Thermal)	380,000	£38,000.00	68,400	. .	 Electric Tariff – 27p/kWhr 	 Electric – 0.0
Electric	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244		 Natural Gas Tariff – 10p/kWhr 	 Natural Gas
Energy Source	Energy Consumed (kWhr/annum)	Cost of Energy	CO2 Emissions (kgCO2/annum)		• GIFA – 1,900m2	DEFRA 2032 Pr

DEFRA 2032 Predicted Carbon Fuel Factors:

Cost of Energy

£23,598.00 £20,520.00

£44,118.00

CO2 Emissions

kgCO2e/annum)

5,244

4,560

9,804

Natural Gas – 0.18 kgCO2/kWhr

Electric – 0.06 kgCO2/kWhr

87% reduction in CO2 emissions

Gold Level Thermal Envelope Improvements

Energy Source	Energy Consumed (kWhr/annum)	Cost of Energy	CO2 Emissions (kgCO2e/annum)
Electric	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244
Gas (Thermal)	190,000	£19,000.00	34,200
TOTAL	277,400	£42,598.00	39,444

Silver Level Thermal Envelope Improvements

Energy Source	Energy Consumed (kWhr/annum)	Cost of Energy	CO2 Emissions (kgCO2e/annum)	Energy Source	Energy Consumed (kWhr/annum)	Cost of Energy	CO2 Emissions (kgCO2e/annum)
Electric	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244	Electric	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244
Gas (Thermal)	218,500	£21,850.00	39,330	Electric (Thermal)*	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244
TOTAL	305,900	£45,448.00	44,574	TOTAL	174,800	£47,196.00	10,488

Bronze Level Thermal Envelope Improvements

Energy Source	Energy Consumed (kWhr/annum)	Cost of Energy	CO2 Emissions (kgCO2e/annum
Electric	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244
Gas (Thermal)	266,000	£26,600.00	47,880
TOTAL	353,400	£50,198.00	53,124

Energy Source	Energy Consumed (kWhr/annum)	Cost of Energy	CO2 Emissions (kgCO2e/annum)
Electric	87,400	£23,598.00	5,244
Electric (Thermal)*	106,400	£28,728.00	6,384
TOTAL	193,800	£52,326.00	11,628

* Electric Space Heating via ASHP and PoU Electric Water Heating.



Restoration.



















