

Music and Performance Venue – FAQ

1. Will there be a new performance venue to replace the Assembly Rooms?

That decision is to be taken by Cabinet based on the result of an Outline Business case currently underway.

2. If constructed what will be the capacity and cost?

The options below emerged from our feasibility work. Using a set of criteria, we believe that the Music and Performance Venue is the best option available. Initial feasibility work has estimated the cost to be about £32 million but this will be confirmed by the Outline Business case.

- a) **Refurbishment** of the existing Assembly Rooms.
- b) **Music and Performance Venue:** Circa 3,000 capacity efficient and flexible venue with a commercially driven programme focussing on live music and comedy events and a separate 400 capacity space. No theatre facilities.
- c) **Lyric Theatre:** A 1,500 all-seated Lyric Theatre (incorporating a fly tower) with a separate 400 capacity flexible space to accommodate smaller secondary events.
- d) **Hybrid Venue:** Flexible venue with either a circa 2,600 music/ entertainment venue or a 1,600 lyric style theatre supported by a separate 400 capacity space.
- e) **The Portal:** An outdoor portal on the Assembly Rooms and Market Place site prior to and in addition to the development of a new Performance Venue capable of hosting large performances for a capacity of up to 5,000 spectators.

3. What were the criteria?

A set of criteria for a new Performance Venue in the city centre have been established based on the following:

- i. be capable of fitting on the existing Assembly Rooms site;
- ii. have maximum cultural impact on the city;
- iii. maximise the regeneration and economic impact on the city (including the night time economy); and
- iv. ensure there is no requirement for an ongoing revenue subsidy from the City Council and be affordable without recourse to Council unsupported borrowing.



4. How will the cost be financed?

The Council has been allocated grant funding of £8.6m from D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership. The Council is exploring other options of financing.

5. Why not renovate the building and save the cost of knocking it down and rebuilding?

This was an option that the Council looked at but it was found that it could not compete with a new-build, it did not have scalable or flexible spaces, it could not accommodate large enough audiences to attract major performers and it would require an ongoing subsidy. The refurbishment option was found to be uneconomical, financially unsustainable and unattractive to entertainment operators as a concert venue.

6. Isn't the Assembly Rooms a listed building?

The Assembly Rooms building is not Listed. Historic England does not consider that the building is worthy of being listed.

7. Who will be operating it?

One of the key criteria is that the venue must be commercially driven, and not require an on-going revenue subsidy from the Council. To meet this objective, the Council was advised by its consultants that the most appropriate operating model was to appoint an operator to run the venue in order to transfer operating and building maintenance risks. Therefore, the operational business models explored through the feasibility work were based on the venue being leased to and run by an operator, with income being generated for the Council through the rental payments from the operator.

8. Will you be extending the Assembly Rooms car park?

This is a desirable option which is included in the cost of the total development. The ambition is to build a larger and user-friendly carpark to replace the current 214-space facility. A larger car park would generate more revenue once operational.

9. How much will the car park extension cost?

It is estimated to cost about £10 million but this will be confirmed in the Outline Business case.

10. When would the car park be closed and what alternative arrangements will there be?

If we go ahead with a new car park, the Assembly Rooms will be closed during the construction period. A review of parking in Derby is currently underway and when this is completed it will provide the information required to make a decision on alternative arrangements.

Latest updated: 26 September 2017