

<b>Report on</b>	Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre Refurbishment Works
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Reporting Officer</b>	Tony McCance
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Tony McCance

<b>Is this report restricted for confidential business?</b>	Yes	
If 'Yes', confirm below the exempt information category relied upon	No	X

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report</b>
1.1	To update Council on development works / refurbishment works undertaken at the Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre during the period of closure.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Background</b>
2.1	The Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre was unfortunately closed to the public for the majority of the period March 2020 – June 2021 due to the Covid pandemic and restrictions put in place by the NI Executive.
2.2	During this period, the opportunity was taken to refurbish and upgrade areas throughout the facility.
2.3	The Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre is now operational 21 years (officially opening in February 2000).
2.4	Throughout the last two decades there has been minimal refurbishment activity undertaken and there has been no additional investment outside of annual operating budgets, undertaken by Mid Ulster District Council since 2015.
2.5	The Burnavon is recognised as the regional theatre for Mid Ulster. It delivers a range of arts & cultural activities throughout the year including music, drama, dance performances as well as numerous workshops, hosting of art exhibitions, conferences and delivering meeting functions.
2.6	Investment was sought from Mid Ulster District Council for essential improvements and works to ensure the Burnavon Arts & Cultural Centre remained as a key Council facility and Regional Theatre venue, meeting a high level of service delivery and accessibility for all customers and users.
2.7	<u>Refurbishment of Box Office / Foyer</u> Mid Ulster Disability Forum undertook an assessment exercise in 2017 for Mid Ulster District Council to assess disability access and service functions within Council facilities.

	<p>The report advised that the “<i>Customer service desk in the Burnavon with a drop down counter is not utilised as designed by staff and service users</i>”. Following discussion with Mid Ulster Disability Forum it was recommended that the counter at which the staff are located is too high for disabled wheelchair users and as the lower counter is not staffed this is an inadequate standard of service delivery.</p>
2.8	<p>Other concerns raised by Management relating to the location of the existing box office counter highlighted that the box office reception area was extremely close to the front door, which operates as the main access to and from the building. During events and performances, this area becomes extremely congested as a through way to exit the building, gain access to toilets, or gain access to backstage area. At the end of events, up to 350 persons are leaving the building through a congested area. Concerns were raised about the restrictive space, particularly given the practicalities of an emergency evacuation, should the need arise.</p>
2.9	<p>Considering both the issue of the height of counter/design and the concerns regarding safe exit routes, Management evaluated the options and proposed that the best course of action would be to relocate the box office to the centre of the foyer and redesign the full layout of the foyer to improve customer engagement, customer service for wheelchair users, create additional space in the foyer for patrons attending events and improve exit/entrance route space to address health &amp; safety concerns. The redesign would accommodate a new box office/reception area, new digital display screens and new information panels for advertising of events and performances, a new designed craft shop and continued provision of visitor information services.</p>
2.10	<p>The estimated costs for these works was estimated at £100,000.</p>
2.11	<p>A request was submitted to Mid Ulster District Council for consideration under the Capital Work Programme.</p>
2.12	<p><u>Dressing Rooms and Backstage Accessible Toilets</u></p> <p>In addition to the above, no development work / refurbishment work had been undertaken to the dressing room and backstage areas in the 21 years of operation. Through changes in accessibility policies and guidance for disabled users, management identified the need to upgrade these facilities to accommodate our customers/clients with disability needs.</p>
2.13	<p>An assessment of backstage and dressing room provision recommended that there was a requirement to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widen doors to dressing rooms to facilitate wheelchair access</li> <li>• Colour contrast of dressing rooms counters against walls and floor.</li> <li>• Dimmable lighting / LED lighting / lowering of switches.</li> <li>• Lowering of sinks to required height for disabled / wheelchair users</li> <li>• Creation of an additional “changing area” to support privacy of persons with additional needs / support workers.</li> <li>• Upgrade of accessible toilet/shower to include turning area, sink replacement, support rails etc.</li> </ul>

<b>3.0</b>	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Box Office / Foyer</u></p> <p>Mid Ulster District Council agreed to support the refurbishment works required and allocated a budget of £100,000 under the Capital Works Programme.</p>
3.2	<p>Property Services were appointed to complete works identified. Works commenced in January 2021 and completed in March 2021 at a cost of £88,314.30.</p>
3.3	<p>The high quality of the work undertaken has totally revamped the area creating much needed space and ensuring that the facility is now fully accessible. A site visit has been carried out by a Mid Ulster Disability Forum member who is extremely satisfied with the standard of works and adjustments made to become a more inclusive and accessible space for all users.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Dressing Rooms and Backstage Accessible Toilets</u></p> <p>The Burnavon submitted an application to the Department for Communities Access &amp; Inclusion Programme 2020/21 for grant support to complete required works for modification of 2 dressing rooms and 1 accessible toilet area backstage.</p>
3.5	<p>Following a quotation exercise, the cost to complete the works was detailed at £27,840. An application was made to the DfC Access and Inclusion Programme for the full amount and the Burnavon was successful in receiving 100% funding of the monies required to complete the works.</p>
3.6	<p>Work commenced in January 2021 and was completed Mach 2021.</p>
3.7	<p>Management consulted with local user groups with accessibility and inclusion needs in advance of agreeing required works undertaken.</p>
3.8	<p>Following completion of works, a site visit has been carried out by a Mid Ulster Disability Forum representative who was extremely satisfied with the works and adjustments made enabling the Burnavon Arts &amp; Cultural Centre becoming a more inclusive and accessible venue.</p>
3.9	<p>In addition to these capital works, the Burnavon during closure has also installed new external signage, replaced and upgraded facility boiler, burners and oil tank to required standard, and installed bilingual internal signage (images of all works undertaken are included as Appendix 1).</p>
<b>4.0</b>	
<b>4.1</b>	<b>Financial, Human Resources &amp; Risk Implications</b>
	<p>Financial:</p> <p>The Burnavon Box Office / Foyer refurbishment was funded under Mid Ulster District Councils Capital Works Programme.</p>

	<p>The Burnavon Dressing Rooms and Backstage Accessibility Toilet refurbishment were 100% funded through grant accessed from DfC Access &amp; Inclusion Programme 2020/21.</p>
	<p>Human:</p> <p>Staff time and commitment to the delivery of the project are being met from within existing budgets and staffing resources.</p>
	<p>Risk Management:</p> <p>Reputational damage to Council and Burnavon Arts &amp; Cultural Centre as a result of any inconsistency in equitable and accessible service delivery has now been addressed.</p>
<b>4.2</b>	<p><b>Screening &amp; Impact Assessments</b></p>
	<p>Equality &amp; Good Relations Implications:</p> <p>The refurbishment works at Box Office and backstage area have significantly improved access for all patrons and users, particularly those with specific accessibility requirements.</p> <p>Engagement undertaken with Disability Forum representatives and MUDC Equality Officer from outset and throughout delivery of refurbishment project actioned.</p> <p>Culture &amp; Arts Service provision is delivered by the officer team to be fully inclusive, and is designed to encourage wide participation from all sections of the community and in the promotion and support of good relations between all sections of the community within Mid Ulster</p>
	<p>Rural Needs Implications:</p> <p>Rural Needs implications are considered as part of the product offering and delivery of services of the Burnavon Arts &amp; Cultural Centre as part of Culture and Arts Services within the Business and Communities directorate of Mid Ulster District Council.</p>
<b>5.0</b>	<p><b>Recommendation(s)</b></p>
5.1	<p>Members are asked to note the development works / refurbishment works undertaken at the Burnavon Arts &amp; Cultural Centre during the period of closure.</p>

<b>6.0</b>	<b>Documents Attached &amp; References</b>
6.1	Appendix 1 – Images of refurbishment works undertaken