

# CARLISLE CITY COUNCIL

Report to:- Carlisle City Council

Date of Meeting:- 4th March 2008

Agenda Item No:-

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Public

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Title:- **PETITION FROM THE SAVE OUR LONSDALE GROUP**

Report of:- **Director of Community Services**

Report reference:- **CS 09/08**

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## Summary:-

This report identifies the receipt of a petition from the Save Our Lonsdale Group. The potential use of the former Lonsdale Cinema building has been considered by Community O/S Committee and by the Executive most recently on 18 February 2008.

## Recommendation:-

It is RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The Council notes the actions taken by the Executive in response to the petition from the Save Our Lonsdale Group
2. The City Council releases up to £30,000 from the unallocated 2007/08 LABGI grant to enable the operational/financial aspects for the Lonsdale building to be developed.

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## M Battersby

Director of Community Services

20 February 2008

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers: None

## **1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND OPTIONS**

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007 the Executive considered report CS 88/07 which presented a report by consultants regarding the provision of a Theatre/Performing Arts centre in the former Lonsdale Cinema. The decision was to refer the report to Community O/S Committee who received a presentation from the consultants at their meeting on 17 January (copy of Minute COS.14/08 appended).
- 1.2 One of the resolutions from the Community O/S Committee was that the Save Our Lonsdale Group be invited to make a presentation to the Committee and that all Members of the Council be invited to attend. This took place on 14 February and prior to the presentation the Save Our Lonsdale Group submitted a petition to the Council.
- 1.3 A sample page from this petition, signed by approx. 10,000 people, is appended to this report. The basis of the petition objects to the Lonsdale Cinema building being demolished and replaced by apartments.
- 1.4 The petition was perhaps initiated prior to the decision by the Department of Culture Media & Sport to 'list' the building. This has disrupted the building owners development plans, which have not progressed. It is understood that the owner has applied to DCMS to have the listing removed but no further details are available at this time.
- 1.5 At its meeting on 18 February the Executive considered both the minutes of Community O/S and the presentation which had been provided by the Save Our Lonsdale Group. It was considered that the Group had undertaken a great deal of work but there was still more to be done to identify the capital and revenue costs associated within their proposals.

The decision of the Executive was (Decision ref no. EX40/08)

- (1) That the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and relevant Officers work with representatives of the Save Our Lonsdale Group to assist in the development of their proposals.
- (2) That the Executive agree that two specific external commissions would be required. A feasibility study of the use of the Lonsdale Building to identify the capital costs which would be required to convert the building into a

Theatre/Performing Arts Centre and the preparation of an operational business plan to review ongoing costs and income forecasts of the proposal.

- (3) That the Executive recommend to Council the release of up to £30,000 of LABGI monies in 2007/8 to finance the above works.
- (4) That a further report be presented to Members at the appropriate time.

## **2. CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 Consultation to Date - Community O/S Committee
- 2.2 Consultation proposed - Save Our Lonsdale Group

## **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is RECOMMENDED that:-

1. The Council notes the actions taken by the Executive in response to the petition from the Save Our Lonsdale Group
2. The City Council releases up to £30,000 from the unallocated 2007/08 LABGI grant to enable the operational/financial aspects for the Lonsdale building to be developed.

## **4. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

The recommendations respond positively to the large petition received by the Council and enables proposals developed by the Save Our Lonsdale Group to be fully developed.

## **5. IMPLICATIONS**

- Staffing/Resources – None
- Financial – There is currently no provision within the revenue budget for the cost of the feasibility work. The Council is therefore required to approve a supplementary estimate of up to £30,000 from the unallocated 2007/08 LABGI grant to enable the work to proceed. The capital and revenue implications arising from this feasibility study will be subject to further reports to the Executive and Council as appropriate.

- Legal – The Local Government Act 2000 (Section 2) provides that the Council has the power to do anything which it considers likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. The power may be used in relation or for the benefit of the whole or any part of the community or all or any persons present or resident in the Council's area.

The Council is able to incur expenditure in the manner outlined providing it the well-being criteria are satisfied. In exercising the power, the Council must have regard to its Community Strategy.

- Corporate – The provision of a Theatre/Performing Arts Centre within Carlisle has been identified as a key issue.
- Risk Management – Detailed work on the costs and business case may result in the use of the former Lonsdale Cinema being found not to be a viable proposition, in which case the expenditure of £30,000 is at risk.
- Equality and Disability – None at this stage
- Environmental – None at this stage
- Crime and Disorder – None at this stage
- Impact on Customers – None at this stage