

Title of meeting:	Culture and City Development Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	31 January 2020
Subject:	Hotwalls Studio Update to 2019
Report by:	Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services
Wards affected:	All
Key decision:	No
Full Council decision:	No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the work and activities of the Hotwalls Studios over the past 3 years. It also recommends to bring a future report, in this financial year, for a proposed business model for the site, both to meet emerging priorities and provided a sustainable business model for the future.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 **That the Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development notes the work and activities of the Hotwalls Studios developed over the previous 3 years.**
- 2.2 **That the Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development agrees to bring a revised 6 year business plan model to the March 2020 portfolio meeting.**

3. Background

- 3.1. The Hotwalls Studios scheme was to convert the vacant 19th Century Point Battery arches in Old Portsmouth into 13 new studios and an eatery, providing a dedicated artistic and cultural hub and securing a sustainable future for this Scheduled Ancient Monument and its listed buildings .
- 3.1.1 The city council manages this award winning site which supports both the development of creative businesses in the city and the sustainable re-use of these historic assets.
- 3.1.2 This development addresses the lack of affordable studio space in the city and has developed an incubator space for start-up artists to produce high-quality and unique pieces supported by a creative community.

3.1.3 The project has challenges and opportunities presented by its unique geography which is the closeness of local residents on one side and the marine environment on its seaward side. The site continues to rise to these challenges and has successfully realised many of the ambitions in the coastal communities bid which are outlined below.

3.2 Economic Development achievements

3.2.1 The Hotwalls Studios economic development achievements over the last 3 years has exceeded many of the original ambitions for the site. It has supported the creative economy in a number of ways, creating over 15 permanent jobs including the initial construction staff on site, 25 individual artists have operated from the studios, and in excess of 45 businesses supported through markets and events held throughout the year.

3.2.2 The artists and makers themselves have recruited temporary, casual staff and interns in their busy periods developing a strong relationship with the university and colleges. There are also two staff members permanently recruited within these creative businesses as they themselves build commercial resilience and begin their transition from employee to employer.

3.2.3 In addition to these jobs created externally, the recruitment internally within PCC has provided a number of employment opportunities: a part time Hotwalls Studios Development Manager is permanently employed to manage and develop the site, previously supported by an Events Apprentice, who achieved a Triple Distinction whilst their apprenticeship was served over its 2 year period.

3.2.4 The events apprentice successfully developed an event exhibitions and curatorial programme, and this legacy has continued through the recent recruitment of a 2 year contract post, supported from the remaining Coastal Communities Fund, to further develop digital marketing and support the many facilities challenges of managing a historic asset.

3.2.5 The surrounding business and visitor economy has benefited from the scheme, as in excess of an extra 130,000 extra visitors is attracted to the area each year. The incremental growth of tourism will continue as this regional creative industries hub develops, allowing people to discover the historical character of the area and as we broaden the visitor experience.

3.2.6 In a wider sense, this regeneration has allowed through cultural heritage to maintain values and traditions of a city and its community, not only by protecting its cultural memory, but allowing the artist to be inspired by the conversation and history of the site and its marine nature.

- 3.2.7 The Canteen has developed an attractive catering addition to the Hotwalls Studios and is an important part of the visitor experience. The eatery is open all year round with good customer reviews and a changing seasonal menu which is popular with the local residents as well as visitors to the area. As a Portsmouth based company, the food is sourced as locally as possible using a number of local traders and suppliers.
- 3.2.8 The Canteens future plans include developing the private events programme to strengthen their business model and develop further commercial opportunities. Over the last 3 years the Canteen have played host to a number of cultural events such as spoken word performances and have also supported the Hotwalls Studios in outside food & drinks, complementing the events offer.
- 3.2.9 The Canteen are responsible business owners that review their operational model throughout the year making changes in response to their business demands and integrates with the site as new initiatives are developed.
- 3.2.10 Space is a premium on the site and to resolve this, a lease was agreed in 2017 for a storage/office area for the Canteen. This generates a small amount of income for the Hotwalls Studios and allows an improved operational space for The Canteen.

3.3 **Business support**

- 3.31 The Hotwalls Studios continue to work with *Shaping Portsmouth* and their mentoring scheme to offer free business support and mentoring to the individual Hotwalls Studios with a 3rd of the businesses taking this opportunity over the past two years.
- 3.32 The Hotwalls Studios artists have the benefit of dedicated business support through the Development Manager and the annual business reviews are an opportunity to understand how the business is developing and identify areas of further support. These meetings generate useful and constructive feedback for both the tenants and Portsmouth City Council and help inform the operation for the future.
- 3.33 This business support to the artists also includes constructive advice on bid writing and seeding support, which was success this year from the Arts Council, as one of the artists secured funds to develop her art in the community.

3.4 **Creative Successes**

- 3.4.1 The 13 Hotwalls Studios artists currently include artists working with paper and canvas, ceramics and sculpting, digital techniques within their work, jewellery making through a mixed range of materials, a range of textile artists including the practice of ebru, printmakers and illustrators.

3.4.2 There have been many national and international exhibitions over this period, growing Portsmouth's reputation as a creative vibrant city. Our artists have had work purchased, accepted and exhibited in various locations such as:

- The Royal Academy of arts summer exhibition in 2018 and 2019
- The Royal Society of Marine Artists exhibition 2018
- Mural works commissioned in China and Mexico
- London Original Print Fair winning print maker of the year
- Art Basel in Miami Beach
- Covent Garden - commercial commission for international company
- The Royal Navy QE aircraft carrier
- D-Day 75 art exhibition alongside part of The Royal Collection
- International success with printed books read across the world, as far as forest schools in South America

3.4.3 Our studio tenants continue to host workshops across all their specialisms. This has been an area of development, not only for those creative businesses, but also an opportunity for local residents and visitors to enjoy this creative community and the breadth and depth of what it can offer.

3.4.4 In the past two years we have worked with the Created in Portsmouth arts trail, offering free use of The Round Tower for those artists that are unable to open up their homes or studios to visitors. In addition, many of the Hotwalls Studios artists take part in the event sharing their studio space.

3.4.5 This year, the Round Tower hosted the launch evening for the trail and this allows the Hotwalls Studios to engage with the growing popularity of the arts trail and further support new creative talent emerging in Portsmouth.

3.5 Architectural awards

3.5.1 The Hotwalls Studios has received a number of awards including a 2019 Civic Trust AABC Conservation Award as a Regional Finalist for the South East. This is one of the only remaining independent built environment awards schemes given to projects which demonstrate the highest standards of historic building conservation.

3.5.2 The high quality of the scheme also received recognition from the Portsmouth Society, winning best reuse of historic building in 2017.

3.6 Facilities Developments

3.6.1 The scheme posed huge conservation and design challenge because of its unique geography: the closeness of both the maritime environment and proximity of a number of residential areas.

3.6.2 The intended improvements to the site, post construction, continue to be discussed internally with the heritage officers and the planning service and

agreed through application to Historic England, this process can take many months, and is closely monitored.

In most cases, the type of materials are restricted and specialist contractors are commissioned to ensure the regeneration continues to be sympathetic to the high quality of the original design.

3.6.3 Despite these restrictions and the time these process take, there have been a number of projects that have been delivered post construction or are in progress:

- Installing permanent interpretation signs in the Caponier explaining the history of the site , working alongside volunteers and local communities
- Making safe the mains electrical intake room was an extensive piece of electrical works successfully completed over many months
- Currently overseeing the installation of an improved alarm system under a new contract with 2 years maintenance and repairs support.
- Due to the marine environment many of the timber doors across the site have been replaced in line with the consent from Historic England.
- Extensive works to the Round Tower roof, with the consent from Historic England, which although was outside the original scope of the scheme, the Tower is very much a significant part of the development of the site moving forwards.

3.6.4 A storage space is currently being converted into a small office and information point to be completed in January 2020 and this will allow the Hotwalls Studios team to work on site more frequently.

It will also ensure the more efficient running of the service and reduce the need for staff to travel across the city during the working day.

3.7 Events Programming and achievements

3.7.1 The events programme has developed dramatically over the years from 2 events to an average of 30 events annually, delivered both directly and through our partners, and in addition to this is the regular Open Studios offer, every 3rd Sunday of the month.

3.7.2 The programme of events are listed on the website and the different type of events have included:

- Exhibitions from both our own studio artists but also our external partners from across the city and region
- Theatre performances have been varied throughout the year through the Summer of Sherlock events productions, the Brighton based theatre companies Todos Teatro with "Turtles Don't Like Plastic" and The Lantern Light Theatre Company series of "Dickens' A Christmas Carol" production in the Round Tower this Christmas
- Artists talks such as Kim Edith's success with her "Into the Woods" project and artists speaking about sustainability through their work at Green Drinks evenings

- Artisan market offer through The Traders Keep from May to August each year as well as Christmas events
- Green June month which included beach cleans supported by Colas and interactive weaving with artist Alice Hume
- Heritage Open Days walking tour discovering the history of The Round Tower and the Hotwalls area
- Hotwalls Studio anniversary events with Live mural painting, live demonstrations and workshops
- The Barrel Project, seeing the wider artist community come together and find ingenious ways to repurpose plastic beer barrels and raising nearly £500 for the charity Artwork Portsmouth Creative Skills Project
- A full festive programme of Christmas themed workshops, markets, theatre performances and live music performances

3.7.3 The social media coverage has significantly improved over this period and Facebook followers have increased by 33% from July 2018 to July 2019, website interaction has increased and 12,975 people have viewed the Hotwalls Studios website, while page views have increase by 10.54% and the number of website users have risen by 13%.

3.7.4 An inclusive marketing plan, including audience development and digital media focus, will be developed in more detailed following the agreement of the revised 6 year business plan. This will be to ensure we have a balanced approach to our events programme and to ensure we have plans to engage with as many different audiences as possible from across our communities.

3.8 The Round Tower

3.8.1 The final phase of the project is to secure further capital funding and to complete the development of the Round Tower as an exhibition space, successfully conserving a much-loved historic structure for future generations and maximise the re-use of the Round Tower as an exhibition and creative space.

3.8.2 The Round Tower plans have been outlined to Historic England and a pre-application process is under development ahead of submitting a Scheduled Ancient Monument Consent application for improvement works. This is for the internal environment, however, further external roof works need to be instigated as a priority, in order to mitigate water egress into the building.

3.8.3 A free annual use of the Round Tower is now included in the artist lease to offer them an opportunity to showcase their work as a curatorial opportunity and exhibition space or alternatively as a larger workshop space on site.

3.8.4 In 2019, the number and breadth of private hire opportunities have increased at the Round Tower, from acoustic music venue, to theatre production and gong baths. This has generated a small amount of income and has attracted a different audience to the site which we would wish to continue to build upon and broaden access to these events.

- 3.8.5 The development of the Round Tower will be a focus as part of the business planning process and continue to work with our partners to maximise access to this special space and develop the opportunities for the creative and wider community.

3.9 Partnership working

- 3.9.1 There are many stakeholders and partner that have supported the Hotwalls studios creative community over the past 3 years and some of them are mentioned below.
- 3.9.2 The University of Portsmouth were involved throughout the project from the initial concept ideas by the architecture students which inspired the Coastal Communities bid, through to the Creative Industries department's full involvement in the first year of operation. This close relationship has continued, for example, the work with the University of Portsmouth as a "live client" in areas of study such as filming and business development. This provides a hands on opportunity for students to develop their skills and areas of learning, thus adding to their experience and "work readiness" once completing their courses.
- 3.9.3 Historic England were key partners for Scheduled Monument/Planning Consents and the design consultants involved local's artists in the studio design and continue to be involved as the scheme develops.
- 3.9.4 Aspex Gallery has also been a key partner and we have worked with them on many markets and events. We continue to work with all the studio providers in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight as part of the Studio Providers Network which we have hosted and administer on behalf of Creative Network South and PUSH.
- 3.9.5 There is also extensive partnership working and engaging with the young people and other visitors who enjoy visiting the Hotwalls beach in the summer months and visiting the Parade Ground and enjoying our summer programme.

There are a number of campaigns and interventions the Hotwalls Studio are involved in through the RNLI and Motive8, to ensure we keep everyone safe on the site and this public space remains enjoyable for everyone.

3.10 Local Community:

- 3.10.1 From the onset of the project, the residents and local association were involved in this scheme and involved in the interpretation of the heritage and character of the area.
- 3.10.2 The community supported the sympathetic focus of the design and helped make the area safer with ideas on lighting and make it cleaner, with ideas on waste management and were also involved in writing the content for the Visitor Interpretations Panels which hang on the walls of the Caponier.

- 3.10.3 The PCC Hotwalls Studio management team continue to attend local resident meetings such as FOOPA, and neighbourhood forum groups, and engage with Friends of Old Portsmouth, Portsmouth Society and Local neighbourhood forums.
- 3.10.4 The relationship with the Spice Island Association continues to grow and we now update and engage with this residential community on their ideas for the development of the studios and The Round Tower.
- 3.10.5 Local volunteers have joined the Heritage Open Days events to engage with visitors on the history of the Hotwalls Studios and the Round Tower. The Heritage Open Day event works with the local community to provide visitors information on the history of the Tower and the wider site.
- 3.10.6 Opportunities for social cohesion and participation is also provide through programming such as, working with local community groups such as Women's Institute and FOOPA on beach cleans and guided tours of the Studios, using the Round Tower to display historical artefacts from residents homes and personal collections, and exclusive invites to local residents for opening nights and exhibitions programming.

3.11 Plans moving forwards

- 3.11.1 The key areas of work in 2020 to be completed are:
- To continue to build financial resilience through events programming and other income generation projects.
 - To develop new operational service contracts for the site such as installation of a new alarm system to improve the tenant environment
 - Continuing to build Portsmouth's reputation as a creative hub by broadening our reach to partnership organisations and audiences, to work across the city and regionally to support the creative economy in the Solent area and improve its visibility.
 - To focus on key events improving and developing the Events programme for community and visitor use, focusing on the development of the events in the Round Tower.
 - To continue to develop different ways to support the growth of the creative business on the site and support as many creative industries as possible within the future business model agreed
 - To continue to manage and develop the heritage asset and take forward the priorities in the capital programme including the office conversion, capital investment to the Round Tower and repairs to the Parade Ground.
- 3.11.2 Following three years of operation it is time to reflect on our operational experience as a start-up business, to ensure that lessons learnt inform a new business model to sustain the site for its future operation, and to build on our past successes as highlighted in this report.

3.11.3 A 6 year business plan proposal will be developed for member agreement, reiterating the principles of the scheme and inform the key action moving forwards. This will be brought for agreement at a future portfolio meeting.

4. Reasons for recommendations

4.1 This report has highlighted to members the progress and development of the Hotwalls Studios site over the past 3 years.

4.2 A new business model will be required to meet emerging priorities, provide a sustainable business model for the future and build resilience into the operation, to continue the successes over the past 3 years. These plans will links tradition and modernisation with the present, past, and future to provide a sustainable business model for the future.

5. Integrated impact assessment (IIA)

5.1 An IIA is attached (appendix 1)

6. Legal comments

6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from the recommendations in this report.

7. Director of Finance comments

7.1 The Coastal Communities grant funding was awarded to develop the 19th Century Point Battery arches into the current Hotwalls site. In addition to the capital funding, a revenue grant of £180K was awarded to the Council to support the ongoing development of the site.

7.2 Over the last three years, the grant has been used to part fund staffing costs which are essential for the effective operation of the facility. The Hotwalls Studios are now established as a visitor and resident attraction.

7.3 The Coastal Community revenue funding will end in 2020/21. The impact of this will be addressed as part of the 6 year business plan to be brought to the March decision meeting.

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Signed by:
Stephen Baily
Director of Culture, Leisure and Regulatory Services

Appendices:**Appendix 1 - Integrated Impact Assessment****Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
None	

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development on

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Signed by:
Cabinet Member for Culture and City Development