

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

**County Council
20th January 2016**

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Regeneration and Planning
County Councillor Darren Mayor, Portfolio Holder for
Property, Buildings and Housing

SUBJECT: Question from County Councillor Matthew Dorrance

In November 2015, the Cabinet Member informed Brecon's County Councillors that the planned cultural hub was delayed partly because of a funding shortfall.

Will the Cabinet Member provide Council with an updated position statement, details of the financial shortfall and how the Council plans to close this funding gap so that this regeneration project can proceed?

The Brecon Cultural Hub is a flagship project for the County Council and is part of a major regeneration opportunity for Brecknockshire. The project has taken longer than expected to deliver, largely due to the Grant Funding process, Planning and Built Heritage requirements and ensuring affordability prior to tendering the work to the market through redesign but is now on the cusp of becoming a reality.

There is concern that with an industry increase in building costs running at an average of 6.5% per annum since the submission of the HLF bid (April 2013) that the budget set aside will not be sufficient. This, however, is now dependent on how the market responds to the tendered opportunity following the extensive cost reduction exercise and progression of the detailed design.

In addition to the cost reduction exercise, every effort is being made to close the funding gap including securing £300,000 of additional funding from local partners, Trusts and individuals and the submission of an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a grant increase of £373,457. The support from local partnerships has been crucial in attracting significant additional funding from organisations such as the HLF and we are optimistic that the scheme will be affordable without putting undue pressure on the Councils resources.

Subject to a full cost analysis of the market response alongside the support from funding partners; if the costs remain greater than the budget allocated, the Cabinet will consider how to fund the gap. The Cabinet is aware of the importance of this project to Brecknockshire and the effort, resource and partnership support that has enabled it to reach this stage.