

**ROMILEY FORUM THEATRE AND COMMUNITY CENTER**

**Report of Assistant Director Estate & Asset Management**

**1. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the current condition and ongoing closure of Romiley Forum Theatre and Community Centre.
- 1.2 To update members on progress following the previous update brought to the area committee on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**2. CURRENT POSITION**

- 2.1 As a result of revised Government guidance in August 2023, a review of the SMBC Corporate Estate took place, and given the pre-existing knowledge of an RAAC product being used at Romiley Forum, an urgent inspection took place. The inspection confirmed the presence of RAAC.
- 2.2 NKTA decided to close the theatre following the completion of the initial survey undertaken by third-party structural engineers and discussions with SMBC in their role as landlord.
- 2.3 SMBC commissioned a full structural investigation of the roof deck, and any associated structures to ascertain if any immediate safety works were required. The report confirmed that the RAAC was only present in the theatre. The report was shared with NKTA and discussions with the structural engineers representing both SMBC and NKTA confirmed that the building should not reopen without remedial works.
- 2.4 SMBC and NKTA commissioned further studies to review the condition of the RAAC panels and look at options and costs for remedial works.
- 2.5 Detailed work has been undertaken by all parties to explore the Phase 1 repair works and the Phase 2 RAAC removal works. The parties have reviewed a number of fully costed options before proceeding with the proposed works.

**3. PHASE 1 WORKS – INTERIM REPAIRS**

- 3.1 The project has been allocated £300,000 of funding to finance the phase 1 repair works to the theatre focusing on reopening at the earliest possible date.
- 3.2 SMBC and NKTA have worked together over the last 2 months to scope a package of works that will allow the theatre to reopen.
- 3.3 The works have been designed by third party structural engineers and will see timber structural supports added to the roof structure to carry the weight of the RAAC panels and prevent any collapse.

- 3.4 The works will be carried out by Robertsons Construction who are a key council partner and have a strong track record of dealing with RAAC in NHS and Schools settings.
- 3.5 Robertsons Construction has agreed to carry out the works involved on a non-profit basis as part of SMBC's social value partnership. This will allow the funds to be focused on delivering the best possible value for money for the forum.
- 3.6 The works are due to start w/c the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2024 and complete for the end of May 2024. This is subject to final contractual sign-off and construction risk management.
- 3.7 The works will be subject to final sign-off by the structural engineer and will be supported by an inspection regime undertaken jointly by NKTA and SMBC with annual visits from third party engineers.
- 3.8 NKTA are working on their programme for reoccupying the theatre and bringing back their shows and workshops from the current temporary venues.

#### **4. PHASE 2 WORKS – ROOF REPLACEMENT**

- 4.1 SMBC and NKTA have worked with consultants to consider several options for the full replacement of RAAC from the theatre roof. Structural engineers have reviewed and presented five potential solutions.
- 4.2 The works to undertake a full removal of the RAAC panels will be extensive and complicated with the current cost forecast at between £1,500,000 and £2,000,000.
- 4.3 The works will involve the removal of the current roof coverings and then the removal of each of the RAAC panels and their disposal. A new roof structure would be formed and then made watertight.
- 4.4 The scope of the works at hand necessitates the temporary suspension of activities at the theatre. Consequently, the operations of NKTA will be disrupted during this period.
- 4.5 The project requires securing a funding package by NKTA and SMBC to deliver the necessary work. A planned timeframe for the works is also needed to ensure a vacant building for the appointed contractor.

#### **5. NEXT STEPS**

- 5.1 NKTA and SMBC will work together to secure a funding package for the Phase 2 works that secure the long-term future of the Theatre and Community Centre.
- 5.2 NKTA and SMBC will explore options to apply for and secure grant funding from relevant Arts and Cultural bodies.
- 5.3 NKTA and SMBC will continue to lobby central government bodies to request funding for the repairs in line with the approach taken to Schools and Colleges. Approaches have also been made to other organisations facing the same challenges so a joined-up approach can be taken.

## **6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 The Area Committee is requested to note progress since the last update.
- 6.2 The Area Committee is requested to note the ongoing work between NKTA and SMBC
- 6.3 The Area Committee is requested to recognise the extensive work undertaken by Robertson Construction and Ridge Consulting
- 6.4 The Area Committee is requested to note the next steps set out in the report.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- **Romiley Forum - Area Committee Update 08.04.24.**

Anyone requiring further information should contact James Kington (Assistant Director, Estates and Asset Management) by email: [james.kington@stockport.gov.uk](mailto:james.kington@stockport.gov.uk)