



St Edmundsbury
BOROUGH COUNCIL

A150

Cabinet 29 July 2009

Public Venue Working Party: 15 July 2009 (Aug 09/10)

Report	Title	Recommendations
Agenda Item 5	Public Building (Venue): Naming	The new public building (Venue) in the arc development, Bury St Edmunds, be named The Apex.

A full report on the process undertaken by the Council in choosing a name for the new public building (Venue) is attached as Appendix A to this Report.



Cabinet 29 July 2009

Naming and Moving the Venue into the Future

1. Summary and Reasons for Recommendation

- 1.1 The new public building (venue) located in the arc development in Bury St Edmunds is a major investment for the Council which complements the retail and housing offer in the arc. In bringing a new venue to the market it is vital that it has a clear vision, positioning it firmly in its marketplace, with a name that will meet the current and future aspirations of potential users.
- 1.2 To assist this process it was determined that specialists should be engaged to help the Council assess the venue's current and future position, articulate the Council's ambition for the building (the 'vision') and work on a process, within stringent criteria, to name the venue. The former Venue Steering Group and now the Public Venue Working Party have met on a regular basis with the specialists and have followed a thorough, robust and industry recognised process to determine both the vision and the name.
- 1.3 Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a detailed report from Poulsen Selleck, the specialists, which outlines the process followed to determine the name.
- 1.4 On 15 July 2009, the Public Venue Working Party resolved to recommend to Cabinet that the new venue in the arc be named the Apex.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet recommends to full Council that the new public building (venue) in the arc development, Bury St Edmunds be named the Apex.

3. Corporate Objectives

- 3.1 The recommendation meet the following, as contained within the Corporate Plan:-
- (a) Corporate Priority: *'to secure a sustainable and attractive environment'*; and
- (b) Cabinet Commitments: *'4, Bury St Edmunds town centre – a range of events for new public venue'*.

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4. Key Issues

- 4.1 The Council's aspiration in building the new venue is to provide a multi-purpose venue to replace the ageing Corn Exchange that will meet the needs of today while being a fit for purpose venue to serve future generations.
- 4.2 In furthering this aspiration it was important that the Council clearly determines the building's position within the leisure, arts and business markets and, more precisely, what services it would provide. Key to this is to determine the balance between community, commercial and artistic use.
- 4.3 The specialists used research, analysis, workshop stakeholder meetings and focus group to confirm the vision for the venue and, leading from that, recommended names for the Public Venue Working Party to make a final choice for recommendation to Cabinet.
- 4.4 There was a structured approach to the naming to avoid a random choice, with an original master list of more than 500 names generated. Each name was scored against a brief (previously agreed with the Steering Group), and then short-listed by a Panel. The shortlist went through an initial legal evaluation to ensure they were valid and available.
- 4.5 This process has shown the success of the venue is influenced by more than one element, whether that's a name or amount of money spent on the building. The real deciding factors are that there is a clear vision for the building, strong leadership to achieve that ambition, and a top-quality customer experience that draws people back time and time again. The name is just one part of this context.
- 4.6 Poulsen Selleck undertook a combination of desk research and in-depth interviews with stakeholders to establish a clear picture of the aspirations and ideas regarding the vision for the venue and its operating environment. A workshop helped to identify the need for strong leadership and a programming element, to bring life and excitement to the venue.
- 4.7 Before deciding a name, a brief was devised which took into account various factors such as: What is the purpose of the building we are naming? Who is the audience? What's the usage? What must the name contain? How should it work? What's its personality? Which types of name are most likely to meet the needs of the brief? The brief went to an internal team of councillors, staff and youth representatives.
- 4.8 The Working Party initially reduced a shortlist of fifteen to three, scoring each name against strict criteria, and further names were considered at a subsequent meeting. In total about 500 potential names were set against the criteria which came from the brief (based on the vision for the venue). Among the factors to be considered were: Are the proposed names effortless to comprehend, pronounce, and commit to memory? Do they trigger any other, potentially unsuitable, meanings? Could the names be changed or used in a vulgar manner? Could they be confused with anything else with a similar name or initials?
- 4.9 Officers undertook to establish if any of the shortlisted names were either used by other similar businesses, or if the names could be confused with other places in the region. The two alternatives favoured by the working party passed these tests at this time.
- 4.10 Following consideration by the Working Party, further information became available which suggested that one of the alternatives could cause confusion. At a subsequent meeting the Working Party decided to discount this potential name to avoid any possible confusion in the future.

4.11 The name that has been recommended is designed to meet the needs of promoting the business of the venue now and in the future. The name further promotes the physical attributes of the building (both internal and external images show it reaching an apex – a high point) as well as aspirational attributes.

5. Other Options considered

5.1 There were potentially many ways in which the name could have been selected. The Council could have determined the vision and name through a range of other techniques. It could have been made through Members and officers determining the position. The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Sport, in consultation with Cabinet, could have determined the name. The Head of Leisure Services, in consultation with his team and colleagues, could have determined the name. The name could have been determined by a public vote or competition. However it was felt that the investment the Council was making in the venue on behalf of taxpayers merited professional expertise. This would be helpful to ensure that a robust and professional approach was adopted instead of random name generation untested by criteria linked to the building's vision, the reason for its existence.

5.2 The Council's initial position was that the venue would solely be a venue for hire. However it became increasingly clear during the process with Poulsen Selleck that the building provided significantly more than this in terms of potential opportunities for a range of programmed entertainment, artistic and commercial events. The specialists were of tremendous assistance to the Venue Steering Group and the Public Venue Working Party in determining a balanced approach to the programme and articulating that vision, from which came the brief which was used to identify an appropriate name.

5.3 The Council was very aware that the new venue is only part of the commercial, entertainment and cultural offer in Bury St Edmunds, West Suffolk and further afield. It was important that a position was developed which complemented the range of other opportunities in the region.

6. Community impact *(including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and diversity issues)*

6.1 General

6.1.1 The name is designed to appeal to a wide community while recognising that no name will satisfy everyone. Apex is easily understood, it will be something that the community can resonate with immediately and which can be quickly adopted by the community and serve it for many years to come.

6.1.2 The programme in the new venue will have a far reaching community impact. There will be 7 key components to the programme in the venue:-

- (a) events programmed by the venue that customers can buy tickets for;
- (b) events promoted by external hirers that customers can buy tickets for;
- (c) events promoted as part of the annual Bury St Edmunds Festival;
- (d) public events that the community can attend;
- (e) private and commercial hires:- parties and weddings;
- (f) conferences, seminars and meetings; and
- (g) outreach work.

6.1.3 The venue will programme around 25 events a year, and will seek to attract around 45 events promoted by external hirers. The Bury St Edmunds Festival will seek to promote around 10 events in the venue. It is anticipated that around 100 community events will take place, which will be a combination of events transferred from the Corn Exchange and new events. It is projected that around 170 commercial hires will take place in a year covering conferences, meetings, dinner dances and weddings etc.

6.1.4 It is anticipated that a typical programme will include:-

- (a) events for young people, including bands and live music events;
- (b) small to medium size bands that appeal to all ages, including tribute bands;
- (c) classical, jazz, choral and folk music;
- (d) literature, poetry and book reading events;
- (e) comedy;
- (f) local amateur groups;
- (g) educational and workshop activity;
- (h) school group/youth music performances and competitions;
- (i) celebrity guest evenings; and
- (j) sporting entertainment, exhibition and special events.

6.2 Diversity

6.2.1 The overall programme of events will be designed to meet the needs of the whole community, especially those who currently have to travel further afield (such as young people, in a similar way to the two multiplex cinemas that St Edmundsbury brought to the Borough and which are providing more local, accessible, and economically beneficial entertainment) . The venue itself will be fully accessible and the infrastructure will ensure that all can enjoy the events in the new building.

7. **Consultation**

7.1 Throughout the process the specialists have undertaken a range of consultations. To assist in determining the vision the specialists consulted with representatives of the Youth Forum, they undertook in depth interviews with a stakeholder group and involved a selected focus group to debate the shortlisted names. All Members, and staff, were also invited to contribute possible names. Throughout the process the specialists consulted with the former Venue Steering Group and the Public Venue Working Party. The Portfolio Holder for Culture and Sport and officers have worked closely with the specialists throughout the process.

8. **Resource implications** *(including asset management implications)*

8.1 On 31 March 2009 Council approved the Business Plan for the new venue and Athenaeum for three years from 2010/2011 (minute 100(A)(4) refers).

8.2 A £30,000 budget was allocated to engage the specialists. Poulsen Selleck were selected after a robust selection process led by the council's Procurement Officer, involving an extended panel interview which included the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Sport and the Head of Leisure Services.

9. Risk Assessment *(potential hazards or opportunities affecting corporate, service or project objectives)*

9.1

Risk area	Inherent level of Risk (before controls)	Controls	Residual Risk (after controls)
	High/Medium/Low		High/Medium/Low
Selecting an inappropriate name		The selection of a specialist as detailed above	Low
Not determining a vision		Working with the specialist as detailed above	Low

10. Legal or policy implications

10.1 The specialists advised on the process to be undertaken to check that the legal and operational use of the proposed name. These checks have been undertaken by the Council's Legal Section, supported by the Communications Section, and advise that there are no significant issues with the use of this name.

Wards affected	All	Portfolio Holder	Culture and Sport
Background Papers		Subject Area	Leisure, Sport, Arts and Culture




Naming the new public venue

A report on the process - its objectives,
implementation and results.

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poulsen selleck 

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Introduction

Poulsen Selleck won the contract to support St Edmundsbury Borough Council's process to develop the vision and the name for the new public venue, due to open in 2010.

Through workshop, research and analysis, we were able to draw out the ideas and ambitions of the venue team, alongside those of stakeholder groups, in order to confirm the vision for the venue and define the part it is to play in the future.

Being clear about the principles for the operation of the venue helps everyone to understand how it is going to fit; it sets expectations. It also makes other decisions easier. The first of those is its name.

Our structured approach to naming ensures that name generation is not random, but is clearly directed, in this case with the intention of finding a name that is compatible with the vision for the venue.

We involved a wide group of people in name generation to assemble a master list of more than 500 names. Each name was scored against its agreement with the brief, and then short-listed by a panel from the venue committee.

The shortlist of names has gone through a legal evaluation to ensure that the names are valid and available.

By following a well-managed creative process, the council has shown appropriate care and attention to ensure the venue gets off to the best start. We're confident that it will fulfill its ambitions for a venue that can prove its worth to the cultural life of the town and beyond.

The venue will contribute to the future prosperity and wellbeing of our area by delivering a vibrant, contemporary venue offering a range of cultural and commercial opportunities to create memorable experiences for the residents of, and visitors to, West Suffolk.

About Poulsen Selleck

Poulsen Selleck is a fast-growing creative agency with an appetite for challenging projects and ambitious clients. We offer a rare breed of insight and innovation that can only come from a team of talented individuals in all the key areas of strategy, branding, advertising, design and communication.

Our team offers a combination of solid track record with major brands and top London and European agencies, plus some of the best young creative talent around. It says a lot about Poulsen Selleck that our talent has sought us out, rather than the other way around.

Although we base our creative solutions on a foundation of solid research, we have over time developed an instinctive understanding of 'challenger' brands.

We firmly believe that creative answers are waiting for every aspect of marketing. Only with extraordinary creativity can businesses hope to gain the uplift they seek in a packed market.

Our award winning solutions create differentiation and inspire customer excitement.

Capability

Poulsen Selleck is a creative organisation at heart. It uses its creative skills to increase engagement with customers, staff, and other stakeholders.

Brand consulting

Robust processes underpin a highly creative approach to brand auditing, analysis, brand development, strategic realignment and refreshing the brand experience from every angle.

Marketing planning

Matching budgets to ambitions and objectives is Poulsen Selleck's specialty. Even if your big idea has a small budget, it's all-important to understand how to be most effective through targeting, segmentation, choice of strategy, tactics and communications tools.

Campaigns

A happy conjunction of teams of art directors and creative directors continues to produce stretching creative campaigns that make our clients stand out, and create traction with the target audience. We win awards for highly creative, imaginative campaign ideas and faultless executions.

Marketing services

It's a pity that many brands think only the big things matter. Yet it only takes one bad experience on the phone or one misguided direct mail execution to ruin all your investment in marketing. The lesson is that in the wake of brand campaigns it is just as important to pay attention to all the little things your brand does. They all matter to someone.

The challenge

In the last ten years much change has come to Bury St Edmunds. It is growing and its population is diversifying; the infrastructure and services that must be provided by the borough to support its growth are vastly greater than at any time in its history.

The present highly visible change to the town is the development on the site of the former cattle market. An important element in the site is a new public venue, added to the development following consultation which showed there was a demand, especially from young people, for a modern, multi-purpose building which could stage a range of events.

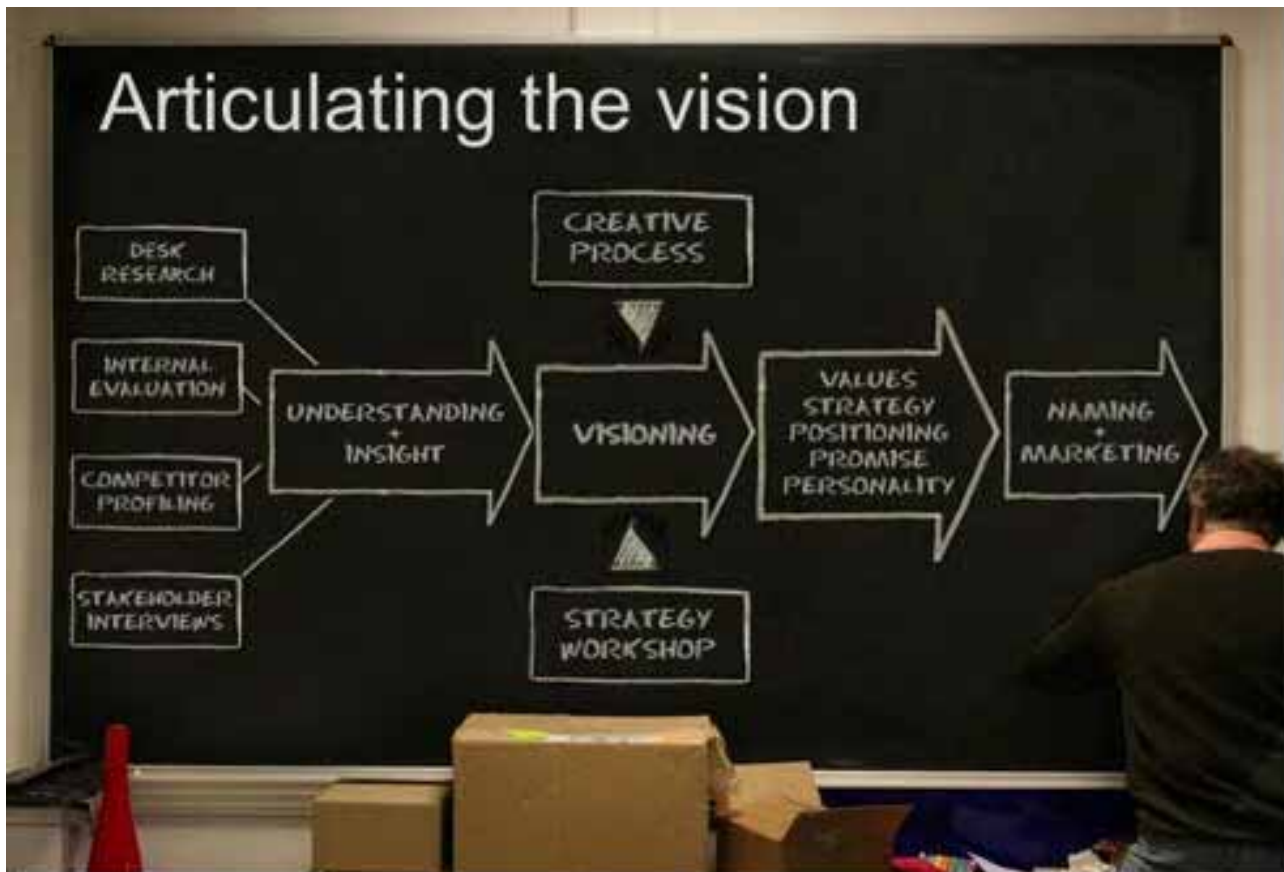
The success of a large capital investment like the new venue is influenced by more than the amount of money spent. The real deciding factors are that there is a clear vision for the building, and strong leadership to realise it.

It follows that the name should be seen in the context of the whole venue experience. That is, it is a significant contributor to its long term appeal, but not the most significant. Run it well, live up to the vision, and continually delight audiences and hirers, and the name will be associated with all the right things. Fail in the running of it, by providing patchy content and an indifferent customer experience, and the name, however beautifully crafted or chosen, will be immaterial.

Although there was controversy over naming the new town centre development 'arc' the significance of the name has subsided as people are more concerned with the retail experience. Architecturally speaking, the development is far better than many towns can claim. There is a general sense that Bury is demonstrably moving with the times and the development is helping, along with the nearby cinema, to stop the flow of people to other towns.

The name, acceptable or not on immediate hearing, will not be the point on which people make their choices about the venue. Its success will be determined by the whole experience.

The process



To develop the vision, we followed a tried and tested process to gain understanding through research and consultation, then developed ideas with the venue team and presented to the steering group for approval.

Creating and sharing the vision

The venue became a part of the plan for the cattle market site following consultation during the evolution of the masterplan for the whole site. The Council, which owns the Corn Exchange, planned to replace it with a contemporary venue capable of more flexible use to better serve the needs of the town. That is a good reason for the new venue's development, though not a vision for what it will be like.

Understanding the vision – what the venue should become in the context of the town and the wider region – has more to offer than a potential solution for naming. The vision is the basis for determining the direction of the venue.

It is perhaps better to consider the name as the first of many decisions that the vision makes easier. Our proposal for articulating the vision of the venue, through workshop, research and analysis, teased out the ideas and ambitions of the venue team, alongside those of stakeholder groups, in order to establish a clear statement of the purpose of the venue which everyone can understand and support.

If the venue is to be a commercial and cultural success, its progress will be greatly assisted by the clear understanding of what it stands for.

The history of Bury St Edmunds is well-known in the town. You can't move for heritage in the place. Fantastic or inspiring or valuable it may be, but people do still have to live here. Like other historic towns, if heritage is allowed to dominate decision-making to the exclusion of the real needs of Bury's diverse community, Bury could be in danger of disappearing into a location role in a costume drama.

In the town, heritage must play a part in its future, but for the venue, this is all about where Bury is going, and much less about where it has come from.

Desk research

We undertook a combination of desk research and in-depth interviews with stakeholders to establish a clear picture of the aspirations and ideas regarding the vision the venue, and its operating environment.

We asked broad questions:

- What's going on out there? Desk research into market, trends, forecasts
- Perceptions held by customers (divided by hirers and audience) that most strongly influence preference: Is it flexibility? Technology capability? Reputation? Price?
- Brand image: What should it be? What experience do we want to create, should it be a national centre?
- What should be our position relative to competitors in terms of all of the above?

Stakeholder group research

We also sought to gain insights from relevant stakeholders about their attitudes and opinions on the vision for the venue, covering their thoughts on how it should be positioned, its character, and what event types should be targeted.

This phase involved one-to-one in-depth interviews, 10 interviews each 30 minutes in length.

The findings were fed into the brand development creative process, in order to reach a statement of the positioning, the vision, and the brand proposition.

Workshop and presentation

It's not enough to create an identity or a logo. We believe that the venue needs a consistent brand message creatively interpreted throughout the business, supported by your staff and the Council as a whole. Sharing the values and the sense of purpose will bring about a consistent experience, evident to customers and distinct from the competition.

Through a client workshop we determined the building blocks of the brand.

We asked the team to identify the values and personality of the brand, and to position the new venue in the universe of other venues in the town, and in the region.

The output of the workshops and the research were used by the agency to develop ideas for the brand strategy, positioning, and promise.

A presentation of conclusions from research and the workshop was given to stakeholders. Importantly, we identified that the 'venue-for-hire' model would not achieve the Council's ambition for a venue with a broad vision of cultural, commercial, and community benefit.

Breakthrough thinking

Our presentation to the steering group identified the need for strong leadership at the new venue and an element of content programming in order to ensure the venue had a genuine sense of direction.

Without leadership and artistic direction, the venue would not be able to ensure it achieved its ambition to support a diverse cultural community. Artistic direction and event promotion left to the forces of the market would not, it was felt, enable Bury to offer the range and depth of content which its people demand.

It was believed by the steering group that this was a point on which intervention, in the form of an artistic leadership appointment and an artistic programming budget, was not only desirable, but essential to achieve the vision of the venue.

Developing the brand name



The above illustration is the outline process we followed in generating name ideas, evaluating and short-listing. The elements are described in detail below.

Define the brief

Complete clarity at the briefing stage is a significant determinant of successful naming. Due consideration was given to each of the following aspects in the brief:

- What are we naming?
- Who makes up the audience?
- What's the usage?
- What must the name contain?
- Is it part of a language?
- How should it work?
- What's its personality?
- Which types of name are most likely to meet the needs of the brief?

The brief was agreed by the steering group and presented to an internal team at Bury St Edmunds made up of councillors, officers, and youth representatives.

Candidate names

The success of the naming process is greatly defined by the creativity of initial name generation. Unless there is a clear reason why you need a specifically descriptive name, you've got to keep pushing ideas and generate a large master list.

Several aspects of the brief as well as the clear statement of the vision acted as useful starting points and rich sources of candidate ideas.

We aimed to generate several hundred names. We used members of the steering group team and selected stakeholders as providers of candidate lists in order to broaden and deepen the master list. Each person given a was appropriately briefed on the task.

We generated, in the first attempt, approximately 500 names.

Initial selections by the agency

On collation of the master list, we conducted an initial selection based on the criteria in the brief and on a triage approach of deciding whether names met the brief and were either probable, possible, or probably not available.

We presented a selection of fifteen names, along with the master list to a team from the steering group for approval.

Working with the steering group, we attempted to reduce the shortlist of names to three, establishing which names most closely matched the brief and had the potential to assist the venue in fulfilling its vision.

Team and steering group short-list selections

The group was divided into three subgroups to consider each of the fifteen names, scoring each name against its potential to live up to the spirit of the brief. (Scoring criteria and weighting attached in appendix).

The committee identified a group of names which it felt were strong contenders and others which were considered outsiders.

Re-briefing

Although there were several strong names, it was believed that the spread of name candidates did not include names which reflected a need for historical or local resonance. It was also noted that some names could be considered unappealingly frivolous.

The agency was asked to reconsider the brief, and undertake a further name generation exercise to broaden the candidate list.

A prudent check

The session acted as a useful check on the process of name selection, ensuring that the candidate list was appropriate and inclusive.

Adding further candidate names

The agency generated an additional 150 names from which to undertake a second short-listing session.

Second short-listing session

With the working party we considered the new candidate list in a similar manner to the first session - scoring names against the new brief.

The result of that session was a new shortlist, containing some names from the first list and a group of new names.

The working party now felt completely satisfied that any of the nine names on this new list could admirably be used for the new venue. All the shortlisted names now agreed with the brief and the vision for the venue.

Further evaluation

We considered if any of the name candidates had any negative connotations within the local market.

Connotation & Denotation

Are the proposed names effortless to comprehend, pronounce, and commit to memory?

Do the names trigger any other meanings, besides the implied, to indigenous speakers?

Could the names be vulgar, obscene or inappropriate in the local market, and/or are there similar indigenous words, phrases, colloquialisms or trademarks that could cause confusion with the proposed name?

Communication

Without the appropriate communication, a name can be meaningless. We investigated the sound, pronunciation and articulation of the potential name candidates.

Do the names sound unfamiliar, strange or humorous?

The intended feelings of the names and the actual feelings did not greatly differ, we considered. We also looked at the ease of communicating the name, the difficulty of spelling the name, and lastly, any pronunciation issues that may arise in the local market.

Initial Searches

The officers undertook a search to establish if any of the shortlisted names were either taken by other similar businesses, or if the names could be confused with other places in the region. All names passed this initial test.

Final short-listing session

We presented the nine names to the working party for final short-listing. The intention was to agree on three names, any of which would be appropriate for the venue.

After presentation and debate, three candidate names were selected by the steering group.

Market evaluation

Focus group - are there any strong negative associations?

The agency undertook a graphic demonstration of the names on the shortlist. We created sample logos in a variety of styles and three mood boards in order to explain to an uninformed public focus group, how the venue will operate.

The main aim of the focus group was to focus debate on the name in order to determine what if any negative associations might exist for any of the shortlisted names.

No strong negative associations were found.

Legal evaluation

Legal evaluation of availability and any risks associated to the name choice was undertaken by the council officers.

Name recommendation

At the end of the process, having completed all the above stages of briefing, generating names, evaluation, shortlisting and searches, it was the recommendation of the working party that the name of the new venue should be The Apex.

The tower at the front of the venue has a triangular top to it, and the soaring roof inside also suggests the shape of an apex. But it's not just the physical shape which lends itself to the name – The Apex represents an aspiration for high quality and peak performance as well.

Conclusion

St Edmundsbury Borough Council has shown due care and consideration to the important matter of defining a vision for its new venue and suggesting a name.

Without a strong sense of direction, derived from the vision, the investment in such a high quality venue building risks being wasted. That is true not merely of this project in Bury St Edmunds, but equally of other recent artistic capital investment projects elsewhere in the region. The future success of places like Aldeburgh's new facilities for developing musicians, the Luton Centre for Carnival Arts, Dance East's new home in Ipswich, for example, will substantially be based on the clarity of their visions, and the ability to deliver on them.

St Edmundsbury is about to make a new appointment for a director of the new venue with a brief to establish it as an important part of the fabric of the region. With the new director's leadership the venue will achieve its vision of a real contribution to the community, cultural and commercial prosperity of the region.

The value of a sound process for articulating the vision and deciding on the name of the venue will be evident in the long term, beyond initial reactions to the name, and long after debate has moved on from the cost of its building and fitting it out.

Appendix

Venue name short listing criteria

Each of the following criteria was scored out of 100 by each of three groups for every name on the long list. The scores were collated and an aggregated result obtained.

1. Primarily, we are naming an arts and entertainment venue - a multi-purpose facility for hire, programming auditorium events, smaller formal and informal meeting spaces, exhibition space and hospitality.

*Does the name agree with the primary object?
Is it an appropriate name for a venue?*

2. Secondary object: the venue should be a representation of the vibrancy of Bury St. Edmunds.

*Does the name agree with the secondary object?
Could it represent the spirit of the town?*

3. How will the name be used? Put yourself in the minds of people who will use the name and the context of its use.

To what extent does the name inspire excitement, confidence, or pride?

4. How will it be used? Put yourself in the minds of potential users of the venue, its promoters as well as audiences.

Is it energetic, ageless, or adventurous?

5. Specific information: The name should convey an idea relating to its value or benefit, rather than any specific functional information.

Is the name more about value or benefit, than function?

Do you sense what kind of experience you might be in for, more than what kind of place you are attending?

6. Where does it reside? What other language, or nomenclature, will surround the name?

Does it sit well with Arc, Charter Square, or Bury St. Edmunds?

7. What's the usage? Signage, promotion, media, internet?

*Will the name be easy to promote?
Think about the range of media channels.*

8. Is it easy to say?

9. Is it easy to spell?

exit
keep
clear

