

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Acting Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development (Housing and Regeneration Services)

Housing, Environment & Economic Development Committee: 7 November 2007

Subject: Proposed Upgrade of Housing Repairs Depot at Cochno Street, Clydebank

1. Purpose

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to seek Committee approval for an allocation of capital funding from the 2007/2008 HRA Capital Plan to fund the essential upgrade of Housing Repairs depot at Cochno Street, Clydebank for reasons of health and safety, employee welfare and customer service.

2. Background

- 2.1** In March 2007 the Council's in-house Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service was awarded the Measured Term Contract for Repairs and Planned Maintenance of West Dunbartonshire Council's Housing Stock - 2007/2010.
- 2.2** The contract documentation provided all prospective tenderers with the option to use the Cochno Street depot under licence. The licence only allowed for minor alterations to the property which could easily be reinstated and specifically excluded major development work. As sitting tenants the Housing Repairs and Maintenance Service exercised the option to use the depot.
- 2.3** The proposed development work is considered by the Contract Administrator to be suitable for approval as the upgraded asset will remain in Council ownership. The need to upgrade the Cochno Street depot has been a longstanding requirement and a project for this purpose in terms of preparatory drawings etc. was initiated prior to the Council decision to expose the MTC to competition.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1** Cochno Street depot requires to be upgraded for reasons of health and safety, employee welfare and customer service.

3.2 Issues to be addressed

- (a) The accommodation generally requires redecoration and aesthetic improvements given no investment in this particular area for some considerable time. The accommodation space also does not meet current standards with regard to space/employee ratio.
- (b) The current reception area is not suitable, with no seating for the public and in addition this area also accommodates two officers.
- (c) The electrical system requires to be extensively upgraded. The present lighting does not meet current Display Screen Equipment (DSE) regulations and power/network/telecommunications cabling and earthing system is not fit for purpose.
- (d) Floor coverings are badly worn in places and are potential trip hazards. Attempts to mitigate risks have been taken by taping over areas.
- (e) Additional accommodation is required to facilitate integration of service provision and relocate the Sold Property team from Rosebery Place.
- (f) Due to earlier uncertainty regarding the outcome of the Voluntary Competitive Tender (VCT) process no funding was allocated for the upgrade of Cochno Street depot in capital plans for 2007/2008 as the successful contractor was not required as part of the VCT to retain the depot for use.

3.3 Proposals

- (a) Erect new office accommodation to south west of existing office block. New accommodation to comprise prefabricated modular units, which would be relocatable should a future decision be taken to dispose of Cochno Street property asset.
- (b) Create new reception office in existing main office to front of building by reinstating original division wall and create seated accommodation in current reception office.
- (c) Create new office by reinstating original divisional wall in rear large office to rear of existing building and leave the remainder of this large office for a meeting/training room.
- (d) Install disabled person's toilet in new building and ramps as necessary.
- (e) Upgrade electrics in existing office accommodation.

(f) Redecorate existing office accommodation.

(g) Lay new floor coverings throughout existing office accommodation.

3.4 It would be the intention to procure all of the works externally with Architectural Services acting as contract administrators, preparing tenders and employing a private contractor from the approved list. Standing orders and Council/Committee procedures to apply. Drawings have also been prepared.

4. Personnel Issues

4.1 It is proposed to relocate the Sold Property team from Rosebery Place to Cochno Street where it is considered that the proposals would benefit employee welfare.

5. Financial Implications

5.1 Total outline costs for the proposals described in Section 3.3 above are:

| | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| (a) | New Modular Units (Extension) | £94,025 |
| (b) | Alterations to existing building | £12,000 |
| (c) | Electrical upgrade | £36,000 |
| (d) | Floor coverings and decoration | £16,200 |
| (e) | Contingencies | £16,000 |
| Total outline costs | | £174,225 |

5.2 Given that the depot is used exclusively for works associated with delivering repairs and planned maintenance to Council Housing Stock it is considered appropriate that the funding for this expenditure should come from an anticipated underspend on the 2007/2008 HRA Capital Plan budget.

6. Risk Analysis

6.1 The proposed measures are considered necessary to reduce the likelihood of disruption to continuity of service, employee disquiet, health and safety failures and worsening of customer service.

7. Conclusions

7.1 The upgrade of Cochno Street depot was chosen from the following appraised options;

- (a) do nothing
- (b) new single depot
- (c) relocate all to existing Dumbarton depot
- (d) upgrade Cochno Street

7.2 Benefits of option 7.1 (d) above include:

- (a) retention of Clydebank base
- (b) minimal disruption to employees and service users
- (c) reduction in impact of any A82 road disruption (critical single route from Dumbarton)
- (d) cost effectiveness

7.3 The proposed measures will improve;

- (a) employee welfare
- (b) health and safety provisions
- (c) customer service

8. Recommendations

8.1 The Committee is invited to approve/support the proposed upgrade proposals for Housing Repairs depot at Cochno Street, Clydebank given the background previously outlined in Section 2 above.

8.2 Given that the depot is used exclusively for works associated with delivering repairs and planned maintenance to Council Housing Stock, the Committee is further invited to authorise expenditure for the project from anticipated underspend within the 2007/2008 HRA Capital Plan budget.

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Appendices: None

Background Papers: None

Wards Affected: All