

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture, & Facilities

Cultural Committee: 27 January 2021

Subject: Clydebank Town Hall Revised Improvement Works

1. Purpose

- 1.1.** The purpose of this report is to propose a revised programme of improvement works within Clydebank Town Hall in order to create an enhanced and sustainable civic building.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1.** It is recommended that the Committee:
- agree to proceed with the Town Hall improvement works as outlined in this report;
 - approve a reduced allocation of £0.95m from the Cultural Capital Fund for these purposes;
 - approve that officers can proceed to go to tender for improvement works.

3. Background

- 3.1** Clydebank Town Hall was designed by James Millar and officially opened on 4 April, 1902. Its original layout comprised reception halls, municipal offices, council chambers, a library, a court room, and a police station.
- 3.2** In the intervening years Clydebank Town Hall has undergone a number of programmes of modernisation, the first of which commenced in 1935 with the transformation of the Grand Hall. In 1980 a series of inter-linked rooms within the Town Hall complex was dedicated to the addition of a museum space.
- 3.3** In 2011-2013 a £3.6m restoration and renovation project at Clydebank Town Hall was undertaken jointly by the Scottish Government, Scottish Enterprise and West Dunbartonshire Council. The project was managed by the Clydebank Rebuilt organisation and was based on a proposal to change the Town Hall into a more commercially-focused venue for the Council and local area.
- 3.4** In March 2018 the Council agreed to create a £4m Cultural Capital Fund to invest in West Dunbartonshire's cultural and heritage infrastructure in order to unlock regeneration, increase tourism and raise the reputation of the area. The 2018/19 Budget Document pointed to the transformation of the waterfront at Clydebank and the perfect opportunity this created to undertake bold and exciting projects that revitalise Council assets and change the way people look at our area. Officers were asked to focus upon renewing the historic Town Hall to make it a venue that residents could be proud of.

3.5 In November 2019 Cultural Committee approved a report outlining a number of significant physical changes to the Town Hall estimated to cost £1.408m. These were to enhance the commercial potential of the building by creating opportunities that enable the Council to maximise income generation. Changes proposed included:

- Removing the coffee shop, booth seats and all existing gallery walls to create a large open plan gallery space suitable for large touring exhibitions of national prominence
- Removing the replica ship models in the main atrium to create a café area
- Landscaping the garden area to the rear, turfing over the Elected Member car park and installing a large canopy structure to provide shelter
- Removing the existing reception desk and replacing it with a desk that faced visitors as they entered the building
- Installing a permanent bar into former police cells adjacent to the Main Hall to provide a better service and reduce set-up time
- Expand the Clyde Room and relocate the Room of Remembrance to the new Museum being built in the basement of Clydebanks Museum
- Re-installing a canopy on the Hall Street side of the building

3.6 Elected Members also agreed for officers to engage a design consultancy to investigate the feasibility of the expanded open-plan gallery space at the Town Hall. This exercise has indicated that there would be higher costs than originally anticipated in realising the vision for the gallery space, and has flagged potential planning restrictions. The outcome of this exercise has prompted a review of the aspirations for the gallery space.

3.7 During the intervening period between November 2019 and September 2020 the Town Hall Working Group – made up of Elected Members and Officers – has continued to meet to discuss the improvement plans. The feedback from the Group has indicated a new shared thinking around certain elements of the plan previously approved. There has also been an expressed desire to see the building operate as more of a Civic centre that is sympathetic to its varied uses, and with less emphasis on weddings and events.

3.8 Finally, the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Town Hall income and future income forecasts. This has prompted managers to consider how to operate the building as efficiently as possible to reflect the fact that future income is likely to be significantly lower than anticipated.

4. Main Issues

4.1. Taking account of these changes the proposed improvement works have been revised to include the following changes:

- Remove the coffee shop from its existing location but retain the existing gallery layout. Modifications will be made to improve accessibility and sightlines between the four inter-connected gallery rooms. The coffee shop space will be incorporated into the overall gallery function for preparatory workshop space, storage and additional hanging space
- The area currently used for booth seating would be replaced by a long gallery where the notable Scottish Colourists collection will be displayed along with other works from the Council's fine art collection
- Appropriate climate control equipment would be installed in all galleries to ensure collections care and preservation standards are met for all works on display. An integrated solution will be sought to reduce the requirement for regular servicing.
- The existing reception area will be retained with a minor adaption involving a glass screen being inserted in the side wall to allow visitors to see Council employees as they enter and vice-versa
- The replica ships will be retained and the area around them will be turned into a maritime museum display, bringing focus to Clydebanks proud shipbuilding heritage
- A self-service food and drink kiosk will be located in the Garden Gallery along with seating
- The garden area and Elected Member car park will be landscaped but there will no longer be a permanent canopy structure. Bifold doors will be installed in the Garden Gallery to allow for improved access to this garden area for the public
- The canopy on Hall Street will be installed, if planning permission and Listed Building Consent can be secured, to mirror the one that previously existed there
- Expand the Clyde Room and relocate the Room of Remembrance to the new Museum being built in the basement of Clydebanks Museum
- Improved lighting of the building will be installed to better highlight the prominence of the structure at night
- The permanent bar in the police cell will no longer be installed adjacent to the Main Hall

4.2. It is anticipated that in time the investment in the expanded gallery offer, the maritime museum, and more attractive coffee area, will attract a higher number of visitors to the Clydebanks Town Hall than previously. In addition the investment in the neighbouring Museum in the Clydebanks Library should bring more visitors to the area who may well also use the Town Hall.

4.3. The Clydebanks Town Hall is a B-Listed building and these proposals encompass both external and internal improvements. The alterations planned would require planning permission and/ or listed building consent. Officers hope to secure the necessary permissions by undertaking works in a manner sympathetic to the original building design and protecting and enhancing original elements wherever possible.

4.4. Outline costs for these proposals are estimated to be £0.95m. This is a conservative figure that builds in significant contingency in the event that

unexpected issues emerge when undertaking works in such an old building. Given the recent external funding previously achieved for renovations at the Town Hall (2011) it is unlikely that the Council will secure any further funding for this project. It is recommended that the funding for this project come from the £4m Cultural Capital Fund.

4.5. The Chief Officer for Citizen, Culture and Facilities and the Asset Management team previously led an internal options appraisal, with participation from Libraries and Culture, Communications, Finance, Procurement and Legal Services. This considered the option of doing nothing versus undertaking improvement works. These were judged against the following criteria:

- Impact/benefits (particularly with regard to regeneration)
- Commercial and financial sustainability (particularly with regard to the revenue budget)
- Physical fit in space
- Likely demand
- Level of risk (inverse)
- Potential for displacement (inverse)
- Public Access
- Attraction of additional visitors to West Dunbartonshire
- Restoration of a cultural asset
- Likelihood of attracting external funding

4.23 The exercise illustrated the following:

Option	Overall points score
<u>Option 1</u> Undertake improvement works to the Town Hall	125
<u>Option 2</u> Do nothing (<i>Reactive repairs will be undertaken as required from existing budgets at no additional cost to Council</i>)	66

4.24 Option 1 scored highly on restoration of a cultural asset; the impact/benefits; commercial and financial sustainability; and physical fit in the space.

5 People Implications

5.1 Replacing the coffee shop with a self-service kiosk will have implications for two catering assistants within the Clydebank Town Hall team. Due to the Covid-19 temporary closure of Clydebank Town Hall, these employees are currently working within the Council's Facilities Management (FM) service. It is anticipated that they could be re-deployed to permanent roles if they wished to continue working in FM via the Council's SWITCH policy, or seek other opportunities via the policy.

6 Financial & Procurement Implications

- 6.1** The anticipated cost of the proposal recommended in this report is £0.95m. That is £0.458m less than the proposal originally approved by Committee in 2019.
- 6.2** In March 2018 the Council created a £4m Cultural Capital Fund and it is the recommendation of officers that this Fund should support the costs of this project in its entirety. If this was approved by Committee then there would be no additional cost to the Council beyond what is already agreed within the Council's Capital Plan. For the benefit of Committee the following other projects are also in the pipeline for the Cultural Capital Fund. Costs are not available for one of these so indicative outline estimates have been provided. This table is purely for illustrative purposes and does not form part of any agreement on these individual projects. Each of these reports independently to Committees:

Project	Cost
Alexandria Library museum, lift and new public-use room	£0.330m (Agreed)
Town Hall external roof and stonework	£0.252m (Agreed)
Clydebank Library basement museum	£0.575m (Agreed)
Bruce Street Baths upgrade	£0.100m (Agreed)
Back Door Gallery renovations	£0.35m (Indicative estimate)
Total	£1.607m
Town Hall renovations	£0.95m
Total	£2.557m
Funding left for other projects	£1.443m

- 6.3** The change of approach to running the Town Hall listed at 3.7 and 3.8, will not have a negative impact on the overall revenue budget of the Clydebank Town Hall service. It is expected that the redeveloped building and new operating model will actually create a more stable model – particularly taking account of the impact of Covid-19 on income in the coming years.
- 6.4** A procurement project would be undertaken against the overall structural specification. Any procurement will be done in line with financial regulations and relevant financial legislation.
- 6.5** All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £50k is subject to a contract strategy. If approval is given, and before the tender is published, the contract strategy for Clydebank Town Hall will include, but not be limited to: Service Strategy/Forward Plan, Supply Market Status: Social Benefits, Procurement Model and Contract Management.

7 Risk Analysis

7.1 New issues with the historic building may be uncovered, although this has been mitigated as far as possible through a number of building surveys which have been carried out. Officers have also allocated a contingency sum for this project to deal with the unexpected.

7.2 There is a risk that Historic Environment Scotland will not support the proposals and the necessary planning permission and/or Listed Building Consent will not be obtained. This would delay activity and potentially stop the entire project. As previously stated, this risk is mitigated as far as possible by the Council proposing to carry out all works in such a way as to be sympathetic to the original design, and incorporating original elements wherever possible. We are also attempting to mitigate it by seeking early input from colleagues in Planning on proposals.

8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was undertaken for this proposal and it highlighted benefits linked to improved access and clearer sightlines. It also identified positive socio-economic benefits as well as in terms of Education. The EIA recommended the introduction of this proposal.

9 Consultation

9.1 This proposal to undertake improvement works at Clydebank Town Hall has been assessed by officers from Arts and Heritage, Asset Management, Legal Services, Finance, the Corporate Procurement Unit, Planning, Corporate Communications and the Town Hall.

10 Strategic Assessment

10.1 The proposals within this report support the following strategic priorities:

- A strong local economy and improved employment opportunities
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

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Date: 06 January 2021

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Appendix:	EIA on Town Hall Revised Improvement Works
Background Papers:	Administration Budget 2018-19 to Council on 5 March 2018. Business Case for Clydebank Town Hall Improvement Works to Cultural Committee on 25 November 2019.
Wards Affected:	All wards