

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities

Cultural Committee: 23 August 2021

Subject: Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides an update on the Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment scope of works, and seeks an uplift in the budget allocation to enable delivery against this amended scope.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Committee:
- note the update provided regarding the Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment scope of works;
 - approve an additional allocation of £204,636 from the Cultural Capital Fund to enable successful delivery of these works as described.

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 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 making it a venue that residents can be proud of.

- 3.5** In November 2019 Cultural Committee approved a report outlining a number of significant physical changes to the Town Hall. 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 Library
 - Re-installing a canopy on the Hall Street side of the building
- 3.6** Elected Members also gave permission to officers to engage a design consultancy to investigate the feasibility of the expanded open-plan gallery space at the Town Hall. This exercise subsequently indicated that there would be higher costs than originally anticipated in realising the vision for the gallery space, and flagged potential planning restrictions. The outcome of this exercise 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 – continued to meet to discuss the improvement plans. Feedback from the Group indicated a new shared thinking around certain elements of the plan previously approved. A desire to see the building operate as more of a Civic centre, sympathetic to its varied uses, and with less emphasis on weddings and events was also expressed.
- 3.8** In addition, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the Town Hall income and future income forecasts. This prompted managers to consider how to operate the building as efficiently as possible to reflect the fact that future income is likely to be lower than anticipated.
- 3.9** Consequently, in February 2021 the Cultural Committee approved a report outlining a revised programme of improvement works to be undertaken within Clydebanks Town Hall, with a view to creating an enhanced and sustainable civic building. These revised works comprised:
- Removing the coffee shop from its existing location while retaining the existing gallery layout; making modifications within this existing layout to improve accessibility and sightlines between the four inter-connected gallery rooms; incorporating the coffee shop space into the overall gallery function as preparatory workshop space, storage and additional hanging space.

- Replacing the area currently used for booth seating with a new, long gallery where the Council's notable Scottish Colourists collection will be displayed along with other works from the Council's fine art collection
- Installing appropriate climate control equipment in all galleries to ensure collections care and preservation standards are met for the works on display
- Retaining the existing reception area, with a minor adaptation involving a glass screen being inserted in the side wall to allow visitors to see Council employees as they enter and vice-versa
- Retaining the replica ship models in their current position and turning the area around them into a maritime display, bringing focus to Clydebank's proud shipbuilding heritage
- Locating a self-service food and drink kiosk in the Garden Gallery along with seating
- Landscaping the garden area and Elected Member car park, but no longer including a permanent canopy structure in the overarching landscape design. Bifold doors will be installed in the Garden Gallery to allow for improved access to this garden area for the public
- Expanding the Clyde Room and relocating the Room of Remembrance to the new Museum being built in the basement of Clydebank Library
- Installation of improved exterior lighting of the building to better highlight the prominence of the structure at night

3.10 Clydebank Town Hall is a B-Listed building. As such, the February paper committed to seeking appropriate permissions/consents to progress the works proposed. In addition to those elements listed at 3.9 above, the proposal to reinstate a canopy on Hall Street was also made. Advice was sought from Historic Environment Scotland (HES), in the context of the building's listed status. HES offered the view that "the proposal has the potential to detract from the architectural composition and quality of this landmark civic building". This feedback was further echoed by WDC's Planning and Building Standards team. For these reasons, this element of the proposed works will not be progressed.

3.11 The decision to proceed with the improvement works was underpinned by an options appraisal to help determine the preferred way forward: Option 1 - doing nothing, versus Option 2 - undertaking the improvement works as proposed. The exercise illustrated clearly that undertaking a coherent programme of improvement works to the Town Hall was far preferable to doing nothing. In particular, Option 1 scored highly on restoration of a cultural asset; the impact/benefits; commercial and financial sustainability; and physical fit in the space.

3.12 Outline costs for the proposals as described were estimated to be £0.95m and approval was received from Committee that these costs would be met in full from the £4m Cultural Capital Fund. In the intervening period, however, additional factors have prompted a review of this budget. These factors include additional elements that have been identified and discussed at the Town Hall Working Group, a more developed specification that seeks to capitalise on the opportunities presented for transformational change in the building, and importantly, the combined impact of the Covid 19 pandemic and Brexit on

access to materials and labour. For these reasons, a review of the project costings has been undertaken.

4. Main Issues

4.1. Following the February Committee, officers continued to develop all elements of the overarching project specification, pursuing technical input where required, and/or advice and guidance from statutory bodies. While this has led to some elements of the works as initially proposed being set aside, others have been introduced. This includes:

- Removing the Grand Hall stage curtains and blacks and installing sector-standard, fire-retardant replacements. This is a requirement of the Town Hall Fire Safety Risk Assessment and ensures the Grand Hall is fit for purpose;
- Improving the secondary entrance to the Town Hall on Dumbarton Road and the corridor linking through to the Garden Gallery. The removal of the former bus stop on Dumbarton Road has made this entrance and corridor a much more accessible and useful access point for visitors. A redesign of this space will elevate the experience of those attending the Town Hall – particularly for wedding ceremonies and events – and ensure a coherent and inspiring journey from the Town Hall’s impressive front elevation through to the newly redecorated Ceremony Room and Garden Gallery beyond;
- The appointment of a Landscape Architect to lead the landscaping of the Town Hall garden. This appointment is proposed to ensure a heightened level of design is achieved in the garden area, including a requirement to consider how citizens might access and use the Town Hall garden given its key position as a conduit between the redevelopment on Queens Quay and Clydebank town centre. To achieve an aspirational design additional funds for this element of works is required;
- Further consideration of the overall design of the Garden Gallery café area, including furniture and artwork that will respond to the newly landscaped garden and provide citizens with an accessible and attractive meeting destination;.
- Bringing the design element of the Maritime display into the design specification for the new museum space in Clydebank Library. While ensuring connectivity between two key cultural venues, this has further highlighted the technical considerations to be made in determining suitable display solutions for objects within the space.

4.2. The additional works elements listed above have been developed with the continued involvement of the Town Hall Working Group and have been flagged to Committee as areas of further development throughout 2021. Elected Members have expressed support in ensuring that the improvement works when completed deliver transformational change in the building, re-establishing the Town Hall as a key asset, delivering a professional and engaging user experience across all elements of its operation. This ambition further answers the spirit of the options appraisal previously undertaken, as referenced at 3.11 above.

- 4.3.** In the context of both Brexit and the Covid 19 pandemic, The British Construction Information service reported in May 2021 that materials prices rose by 2.7% in the first quarter of 2021 compared with the previous quarter, and by 5.6% compared with a year earlier. They are currently forecasting an annual increase above 7%. While increased prices reflect materials shortages, this issue is compounded by a shortage of labour. Consequently, contractors are revising prices to reflect these challenges. For this reason, proceeding with these works in a timeous manner ultimately represents further cost benefit to the Council.
- 4.4.** To achieve the comprehensive works package now described, an uplift in the budget of £204,636 is sought. This figure reflects the developed specification across the Town Hall complex, and more detailed costings associated with each works element. It also takes cognisance of challenges being faced across the construction sector by building in ample contingency.

5 People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications linked to this updated report.

6 Financial & Procurement Implications

- 6.1** The uplift in budget now sought brings the cost of the Town Hall improvement works to £1,154,636
- 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. Where costs are to be agreed an indicative outline estimate has been provided. This table is purely for illustrative purposes and does not form part of any agreement on these individual projects. Each of these have or will come to future Committees for approval:

Project	Cost
Alexandria Library museum, lift and new public-use room	£0.330m (Agreed)
Town Hall external roof and stonework	£0.252m (Agreed)
Town Hall Investment Project	£0.060m (Agreed)
Town Hall renovations	£0.950m (Agreed)
Clydebank Library basement museum	£0.575m (Agreed)
Bruce Street Baths upgrade	£0.100m (Agreed)
Town Hall/Dalmuir gallery redesign feasibility	£0.016m (Agreed)
Fine Art Acquisition Fund	£0.100m (Agreed)
Asset Management Development costs to support the Cultural Capital Projects	£0.075,350m (Agreed)
Dalmuir Gallery renovations	£0.541m (Indicative)

Sub total	£2.999,350m
Uplift in budget for Town Hall renovations	£0.204,636m (Indicative)
Total	£3.203,986m
Funding left for other projects	£0.796,014m

6.3 A procurement project is already underway to support delivery of the spec approved in February 2021 and will be updated accordingly should approval be given for the requested uplift in funds. Any procurement will be done in line with financial regulations and relevant financial legislation.

6.4 All procurement activity carried out by the Council in excess of £50k is subject to a contract strategy. Subject to approval, where necessary, and before any 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 significant contingency for this project to deal with the unexpected.

7.2 The combined impact of Brexit and the Covid 19 pandemic may continue to impact on materials costs/availability of labour. This will be mitigated by the aforementioned significant contingency in the project budget; and further mitigated by close working with colleagues in the Corporate Procurement Unit to ensure timeous procurement processes.

7.3 There is a risk that the proposals will not get planning permission or listed building consent from Historic Environment Scotland. This would delay activity and potentially stop the entire project. As previously stated, this risk is mitigated 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. It is also mitigated by seeking input from colleagues in Planning on proposals.

8 Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An Equality Impact Screening did not indicate any further action required in relation to any recommendations.

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, 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: 28 July 2021

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Appendix: **None**

Background Papers: [Clydebank Town Hall Revised Improvement Works. Report by Chief Officer CCF, January 2021](#)
Administration Budget 2018-19 to Council on 5 March 2018.

Wards Affected: **All wards**