

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer: Supply, Distribution and Property

Council: 31 August 2022

Subject: West Bridgend Hall

1. Purpose

- 1.1** To update Council on progress with West Bridgend Hall project following the motion to Council on 22 June 2022.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1** It is recommended that Council:

- 2.1.1 note the contents of the report.
- 2.1.2 agrees that officers proceed to tender for a new build for West Bridgend Hall whilst continuing to monitor all opportunities to either negate or augment the Council funding already approved within the ten-year capital plan.

3. Background

- 3.1** At Council on 22 June 2022 Council agreed the following motion:

The Council notes the report and the significant increase in costs since the new Community Centre was first proposed.

This Council reaffirms its supports for the Westbridgend Community Group who have worked hard to get the group constituted and to develop their business plan.

The Council is fully committed to ensuring that the group secure a suitable Community Centre for their area.

Council notes that the ten year capital plan already includes a new Westbridgend Community Centre.

The Council needs to demonstrate best value when committing public funds therefore, prior to progressing with the new built option, council officers are to explore whether the Church Hall which is up for sale and which has accessible access old meet the organisation's needs. This could mean the facility could be available much quicker and at significantly lower cost than the new build option.

This Council requests that officers bring a further report in August with suitable options, highlighting any issues to allow the council to make it's an informed decision so that we demonstrate best value and can progress with securing a suitable Community facility.

- 3.2 A decision was taken at Council on 22 February 2017 to fund the demolition of West Bridgend Community Centre with a view that a Community Asset Transfer application with a detailed business plan would be submitted by a community group for future use. Budget allocation at this time was £675k.
- 3.3 At the time of the budget setting in Feb 2017, the budget of £675k was based on a previous new build hall. The budget was assigned, it is believed, on costs at that time based on a squaremetre basis but did not provide financially for a number of actions – these are set out d in Appendix 1. In addition, the budget did not account for furniture, fixtures and equipment which will be required to deliver the group's ambitions within their business case.
- 3.4 The allocation of budget included other projects Dalmonach Community Centre and 3 Sports Pavilions. Funding allocated to these projects appear to have also been based on costs of previous projects delivered.
- 3.5 As time progressed it became apparent that the budget set at the time was inadequate and this was reported via budgetary control reports.
- 3.6 Discussions with the group had been ongoing with the Strategic Lead for that area since 2017. An application was submitted by West Bridgend Community Hall Development Association including a detailed business case on 4 February 2018. The newly constituted group achieved charitable status in July 2018. The application contained a detailed business case to sustain a suitable new build community facility to be built on the site of the former West Bridgend Community Centre.
- 3.7 Key target groups for future use of the new build include children and families, young people, people with disabilities, older people, people who have become isolated through a variety of issues. The group proposed to open the centre as a community hub. It is proposed that the community hub will include a community café space, after school and evening clubs parent and toddler groups, lunch clubs, arts and fitness clubs as well as bigger events such as weddings, and family celebrations. They envisage that this will bring a positive impact on the lives of all residents in the area.

4. Main Issues

- 4.1 In response to the June 2022 Council motion officers have made further enquiries with Church of Scotland Estates section in relation to whether the West Kirk, West Bridgend Dumbarton is available for sale following a review of Church of Scotland services within Dumbarton area. We have been advised by Church of Scotland Estate section that no instructions to date have

been received to market any properties within the Dumbarton area, nor any indications of a timeline of when this may be occurring.

- 4.2** In addition officers have been liaising with CVS and external funders regarding opportunities for funding for the build or parts thereof but unfortunately there are currently no funding streams available for these capital works at present.
- 4.3** One potential funder is the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) which is a Scottish Government managed fund delivered in partnership with COSLA that supports place-based regeneration projects. The project currently does not meet the RCGF delivery timescales for grant funding in 2023/24, however, this will be reviewed in conjunction with the group for funding 2024/25 in November 2022.
- 4.4** We will be working with the group and West Dunbartonshire CVS in relation to potential funding from “the Big Lottery” and again, the group will be supported by council officers with any application. The outcome may not be known for some time, potentially up to 12 months. This may require advance transfer of land to ensure match funding is confirmed.
- 4.5** Given the lack of suitable alternative facility and any current funding opportunities it is recommended that officers proceed to tender for the new build whilst continuing to monitor all opportunities to either negate or augment the council funding which has already been approved within the ten-year capital plan. This would include:
- Working with CVS and external funders for other opportunities which may become available to access during the programme for the new build;
 - Monitoring other possible facilities, which may enable a facility to become available sooner that will still be able to deliver the group’s ambitions.

5. People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications arising from this report.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** There are no further financial implications arising from this report in addition to the detailed costings provided to Council on 22 June 2022.
- 6.2** There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** There is a risk that should additional budget not become available the aspirations set by Council in 2017 for a new build facility may not be met.

7.2 There is a risk that should the Trustees not extend their current term and new Trustees not found then Westbridgend Community Hall Development Association could cease to exist and the asset would then come back to the Council ownership and the Council would incur additional revenue liabilities as a result.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

8.1 An equalities screening has been carried out for this report and there are no equality issues identified.

9. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

9.1 A Strategic Environmental Assessment is not required for the purposes of this report.

10. Consultation

10.1 Consultation was undertaken with various officers across a number of services including Resources, Education Services, Corporate Health & Safety and Corporate Asset Management.

11. Strategic Assessment

11.1 The provision of a new build hall will contributing to the Council's strategic priority for a strong local economy and improved job opportunities and also assist us in delivering the strategic priority of efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

Angela Wilson
Chief Officer, Supply, Distribution and Property
Date: 17 August 2022

Person to Contact:	Michelle Lynn, Assets Co-ordinator Email: michelle.lynn@west-dunbarton.gov.uk
Appendices:	None
Background Papers:	Council – 9 March 2022. General Services Budget 2022/23 and Council Tax Setting Council – 22 June 2022. West Bridgend Hall – Motion from Council
Wards Affected:	Ward 3