

# WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

## Report by Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

Council: 26 March 2008

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**Subject: Civic Quarter Development, Clydebank**

### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** The purpose of this report is to update the Council on progress to date with respect to proposals for the creation of a civic quarter within Clydebank and to recommend the next steps aimed at progressing this project.

### **2. Background**

- 2.1** A report to the Housing, Environment and Economic Development Committee of 5 September 2007 advised of progress with proposals for the creation of a civic quarter within Clydebank centering on Clydebank Town Hall and the adjoining buildings, including the Bruce Street Baths and the Library. The Committee agreed that the outcome of the initial feasibility study proposals would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.
- 2.2** The Civic Quarter Development working group comprises of Council Officers and representatives of Clydebank Rebuilt. It has met to discuss potential uses that could be accommodated within a civic quarter and the preparation of a draft design brief which could be issued to consultants.
- 2.3** The buildings which currently form the proposed civic quarter area exhibit either a range of structural problems or do not provide adequate operational space internally for their functions. Furthermore, spaces in the Town Hall are underused.
- 2.4** The re-development site of Queens Quay to the south of the Civic Quarter Development site will include a large element of residential development along with business and commercial uses. A masterplan for the site currently identifies an area of affordable housing to the rear of the library building. This then precludes any extension of library southwards in to the Queens Quay site. As part of the redevelopment of the Queens Quay site, commercial and business uses are largely to be located in the south eastern corner of the site adjacent to Clydebank College. Shops and food and drink uses are also proposed at ground floor level fronting the main public spaces in the centre of the site and around the basin.

- 2.5** The redevelopment of the Queens Quay site will involve the developer opening up the rear of the Civic Quarter Development site. This is considered to provide an opportunity to redevelop the Civic Quarter, make best use of the buildings and improve their appearance in relation to the main redevelopment site. It also provides an opportunity for the Council to enter into discussions with the developer regarding land it may wish to secure for the Civic Quarter.
- 2.6** An element of funding and project management in respect of this development would be provided by Clydebank Rebuilt. To date, it has been considered that the proposed Civic Heart would be achieved by converting existing buildings through the possibility of demolishing some of the non-listed elements for new build redevelopment could be considered.

### **3. Main Issues**

**3.1** At this stage there are still a number of major issues which require consideration. These could be summarised as follows:

- (a) the extent of the Council's commitment to this project;
- (b) firm up on the range of facilities to be provided at the Civic Heart, including Council and commercial uses;
- (c) try to get a clearer idea of costs/budgets both in terms of the capital cost and the revenue costs which would arise from any expanded Council facilities and any income which could be generated by the introduction of a private sector operation to the site; and
- (d) ensuring that Members are properly informed as to progress with respect to this project and that appropriate reports are submitted at relevant stages in the project's development.

### **3.2 Council Commitment**

As indicated above, a report was considered by the Committee on 5 September 2007, outlining proposals for a Civic Quarter. The notion of creating a Civic Heart around the Town Hall as part of the waterfront regeneration proposals has been a central theme in all strategies which have been prepared since the establishment of Clydebank Rebuilt. The Town Hall presently faces away from the waterfront site and requires to be integrated within the new development. There are substantial areas of empty property in a slowly deteriorating condition around the area of the old Bruce Street Baths and elsewhere. It is considered that it would be inappropriate to secure the regeneration of the waterfront without tackling the issue of the town hall and it is now essential in terms of the timescale of the redevelopment proposals that progress be made on this issue.

### **3.3 Range of Facilities**

The Officers Working Group which has been established has considered the need for enhanced facilities as part of the Civic Heart. The Working Group has concluded that the following facilities should be considered:

- retain all existing uses within the Town Hall;
- provide expanded museum/heritage facilities;
- introduce an art gallery;
- provide enhanced library facilities;
- introduce community learning/IT facilities and
- provide offices and facilities for Council Elected Members

**3.4** The following private sector facilities could be introduced to the complex and could generate a revenue stream:

- children's soft play area;
- café and
- commercial office space

**3.5** A significant constraint on the introduction of new and expanded facilities at the Town Hall would be the issue of car parking. The present development framework for the waterfront does not make provision for significant car parking areas in the vicinity of the Town Hall. Clearly, some of the uses identified above would require parking and this is an issue which would require to be considered as part of any development brief.

### **3.6** Budgets and Funding

An initial capital allocation for undertaking the construction element of the works has been identified by Clydebank Rebuilt of £200,000 for the period 2008/09 and £800,000 for the period 2009/10. This budget would require to cover any design fees as well as any construction element. An additional £900,000 has been allocated from Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire for the period 2009/10 but this is subject to confirmation and may well be linked to the introduction of employment generating uses to the site. It may be considered that at this stage it would be extremely unlikely that this budget would facilitate the type of development envisaged. Indeed, there will be a significant element of fees in terms of designing a development at this location, over and above actual development costs.

### **3.7** Member Involvement and Community Consultation

It is proposed at this stage to report progress to Council meetings.

### **3.8 The Way Ahead**

It is considered that it is premature at this stage to prepare a design brief for issuing by way of a tender process to design consultants. There is a need to resolve the issues set out above in further detail so that greater clarity can be built in to the design brief prior to the engagement of the Consultants. It is therefore considered appropriate to seek specialist advice on an assessment of the property in its current form as well as basic space planning scenarios developed based on the work carried out by the Working Group. This could allow an outline project to be developed which could be passed to a quantity surveyor for provisional costing.

## **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** New and expanded Council facilities may require additional staffing, however the details of this cannot be confirmed at this stage.

## **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** In terms of capital costs, although £1.9M has been allocated from Clydebank Rebuilt and Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire (subject to confirmation) additional funds will be required to facilitate the construction phase of the development. As this project would improve and enhance Council facilities it is expected that the Council would require to contribute, in some way, significant resources to this project.
- 5.2** It is expected that there would be additional revenue costs associated with the project in terms of the new enhanced facilities however there could also be new income streams from the development and this would require further investigation.

## **6. Risk Analysis**

- 6.1** There is a risk that abortive design fees could be incurred through the design of a building which does not meet needs or which cannot be afforded. To avoid this, it is proposed that further feasibility work as detailed in 3.8 should be carried out with costs being met from budgets already available to Clydebank Rebuilt.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1** The development of a Civic Quarter within Clydebank would support the cultural development of the town and ensure the integration of the complex of historically significant buildings into the redevelopment area of the Clydeside waterfront.

## **8. Recommendation**

**8.1 The Council is invited to:-**

- **note the progress with the proposals for the creation of a civic quarter development in Clydebank and**
- **agree that Clydebank Rebuilt commission a limited feasibility study to firm up on the development brief and to establish outline costs with the cost of this study being met from budgets already available to Clydebank Rebuilt.**

**Elaine Melrose**

**Executive Director of Housing, Environmental and Economic Development**

**Date: 13 March 2008**

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**Appendices:** None

**Background Papers:** Report to HEED Committee of 5 September 2007

**Wards Affected:** All