

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Officer – Citizen, Culture & Facilities

Special Meeting of the Cultural Committee: 7 October 2021

Subject: Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment Update

1. Purpose

- 1.1. This report provides updates on the Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment scope of works following the motion agreed at the August 2021 Committee.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Committee:

- note the update provided regarding the Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment scope of works;
- agree to progress the works as outlined between 4.1 and 4.7;
- agree Option 1 at 4.9 with regard to the Long Gallery redesign; and
- agree to progress with the enhanced accessibility and sightline work in the existing galleries.

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. 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;
- Expanding the Clyde Room and relocating the Room of Remembrance to the new Museum being built in the basement of Clydebank Library; and
- 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 view of certain elements of the plan previously approved. This included 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.

3.8 Consequently, in February 2021 the Cultural Committee approved a report outlining a revised programme of improvement works to be undertaken within Clydebank Town Hall. These aimed to create an enhanced and sustainable civic building and 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 were to 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; and
- Installing improved exterior lighting of the building to better highlight the prominence of the structure at night.

This works programme was approved along with a revised budget for the refurbishment of £950,000.

3.9 Following further Town Hall Working Group discussions, at the August 2021 Cultural Committee a further report came forward that recommended some additional elements be included in the refurbishment at a total cost of £204,636, to be funded from the Cultural Capital Fund. These additional works included:

- Replacing the Main Hall stage curtains and blacks;
- Improving the secondary entrance to the Town Hall on Dumbarton Road and the corridor linking through to the Garden Gallery.;
- An expanded landscaping of the Town Hall garden; and
- Proposals around furniture and artwork for the planned Garden Gallery café area.

3.10 Cultural Committee did not agree the recommendations and instead agreed a motion that stated:

- 1) To note the update at 2.1 (bullet point 1) of the report;*
- 2) Not to approve the additional £204,636 from the Cultural Capital Fund at present;*
- 3) That a report to come to a future Cultural Committee meeting examining options to move away from a commercially focussed venue;*
- 4) Not to accept the concept design for the new gallery café area as is currently proposed, but to proceed with an amended design of the booth area which will form a gallery space to house the Scottish Colourists display;*
- 5) To the retention of the existing café counter area to facilitate self service provision; and*
- 6) To retain the existing garden area subject to refurbishment.*

3.11 This report updates on plans to accommodate these changes and also includes several new elements that have come into consideration through discussions at the Clydebank Town Hall Working Group.

4. Main Issues

4.1. Officers noted the reference in the motion at the August 2021 Committee not to approve the changes recommended at 3.10 'at present'. Further discussions with the Convener and Elected Members on the Town Hall Working Group have highlighted that there remains an interest in progressing with the following works:

- Installing a replacement sector-standard, fire-retardant stage curtain in the Main Hall; and
- Improving the secondary entrance to the Town Hall on Dumbarton Road and the corridor linking through to the Garden Gallery.

4.2. In addition officers received further clarity around the retention of the existing garden area agreed at August Committee. As a result modified plans are now recommended, in line with Elected Member aspirations, to adapt the security gate at the Elected Members car park so it has a push button activation which will meet all health and safety and fire risk requirements. In addition the purple stones that were previously used to dress the garden would be removed altogether, and upgrading works as required would be undertaken with plants and flowers in the garden. Aside from this the garden area will be left as it is.

4.3. At Committee Elected Members also gave guidance to officers to retain the Garden Gallery as it is now – rather than as a coffee shop – and to operate it as a gallery space. Further clarity was sought at the Town Hall Working Group around the aspirations of Elected Members on what would be displayed in this space. This discussion confirmed it was to be quality artwork either from the Council's own fine art collection or showcasing professional artists as part of temporary exhibitions. Officers have considered how to achieve this successfully, taking cognisance of the display conditions in the Garden Gallery and especially the high light level which has the potential to damage any works on display. A number of interventions will be required to secure the Garden Gallery as a viable gallery for future use. These include blinds and window vinyls. In addition the Town Hall Working Group asked officers to revisit the purchase of Bi-Fold doors in the Garden Gallery to be certain that the most cost effective solution was selected, and this would be brought back to a future working group for discussion.

4.4. The August motion referenced the desire to see a self-service facility provided from the retained café counter area. Officers have considered this and would plan to do this using high-quality automated vending machines that provide beverages and food after a cash or debit and credit card payment. Depending on the size of the automated machines available on the market it may be necessary to site these adjacent to the café counter area with milk, sugar and other condiments being available on the counter.

- 4.5. Currently a limited CCTV system is in place within the Town Hall. The Town Hall Working Group has expressed support for seeing additional cameras installed within the building to enhance security.
- 4.6. In addition the Town Hall Working Group asked officers to consider transforming the existing Gallery 4 – the largest of the four interconnected gallery spaces in the Town Hall – into a Children’s Museum. The vision outlined for the room would be a display of artefacts and images that capture the spirit of childhood in West Dunbartonshire over the past 150 years. The Council does not currently hold a collection of children’s materials. To realise this ambition officers would need to acquire objects/ephemera/images to contextualise and tell stories of childhood. These acquisitions would be made by purchase and/or donation, as appropriate. The Cultural Committee indicated that they were keen to see childhood games, comics, cinema and early personal computers all featured. To realise a display of the required quality, it is recommended that a professional exhibition design consultant be engaged, to be directed by officers in the Arts and Heritage team. The Council already has a relationship in place with an exhibition design consultant to deliver the West Dunbartonshire Museum at Clydebank Library and the recommendation would be that we extend that contract to include this element too.
- 4.7. The Town Hall Working Group has also indicated a desire to see the existing Bridal Suite redecorated to become a more neutral dressing room suitable for a range of purposes.
- 4.8. The Town Hall Working Group further indicated their wish to see the Town Hall works completed by Christmas 2021, or as close to that date as possible. In light of this officers have reviewed elements of the renovations and identified the following issues:

Works	Update
Overall gallery project	Based on the February 2021 decision officers have continued to work with external architects to deliver the amended design of the booth area to form a gallery space to house the Scottish Colourists display. This activity will include a full scoping of all works, including all necessary surveys and assessments being undertaken to prevent delays, minimise risks and ultimately mitigate any additional costs or unforeseen issues when work would begin on site. This is considered essential given the complexities of working within a historic and Category B Listed building. Once this is design work is completed it is expected the earliest construction could begin would be Spring 2022 following planning, building control and procurement processes.
Gallery accessibility	Based on the February 2021 decision officers were working-up plans to modify the existing gallery layout by widening the entrances between the four inter-connected galleries and levelling off floors improve accessibility for people with mobility impairments. This work will potentially require

	structural surveys, listed building consent, and other preparations and, if required, may not be completed within the timescales set out.
Garden Gallery	As outlined at 4.3 following the August Committee decision officers have been reviewing the necessary interventions required to turn the Garden Gallery into an appropriate gallery space that controls light levels etc. It is not certain at this point whether that would be deliverable by the timescales set out. More importantly the interventions planned may not be compatible with the design solutions being considered for the Tom McKendrick exhibition planned for 2022. As such it is the recommendation of officers that the interventions in the Garden Gallery are delayed until after the Tom McKendrick exhibition – and beyond the timescales set out.
Garden Gallery glazing	Officers are progressing with the identification of a glazing solution for the Garden Gallery which currently has a fault in the glass screen. The complexities of Brexit and Covid-19 mean the availability of large glazed products is extremely scarce. As a result there is a risk that this element of the project is not complete within the timescales set out. It is the view of officers that this is a small element of the overall project and could be undertaken as and when the product is supplied.
External stonework	The external stonework has been delayed for a number of reasons including Covid-19, the first contractor appointed ceasing to trade requiring a new contractor to be procured, and the availability of materials. Asset Management has made a new appointment, vegetation has been removed from the exterior, and initial surveys at lower levels completed. Surveys at higher levels will begin in October, and the findings will then need to be shared with the Planning Service in order to achieve listed building consent. Given this outstanding activity it is unlikely that this work will be completed within the timescales set out. Officers and Committee have previously been strongly supportive of this work. and the positive impact it would have on the appearance of the Town Hall and it is recommended that this progress.
Children's Gallery	Since the August 2021 suggestion to transform the existing Gallery 4 into a Children's Museum officers have been working on a plan to realise this ambition. At this point we anticipate a design for the room being completed in November, the costs identified, and then a contractor appointed and the work instructed. In addition, as previously mentioned officers would need to acquire objects/ephemera/images to contextualise and tell stories of childhood. These acquisitions would be made by purchase and/or donation, as appropriate. Given this item was raised in August, and that professional work is required to realise

	the vision and gather the displays it is unlikely this element will be complete within the timescales set out.
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Long Gallery

- 4.9.** The works to the long gallery require a decision from Committee. The recommended Option 1 from officers is that these works continue as planned to create a high-quality space equipped with climate and lighting controls. This will ensure adequate protection for the Council's fine art collection when it is on display to the public.
- 4.10.** Option 2 would be to remove the Long Gallery from the scope of works and leave the area as it currently is. The booths would continue to provide seating for visitors using the self-service offer at the café counter.
- 4.11.** Corporate Asset Management has confirmed that as an Option 3 it is possible to build a partitioned space in the existing booth seating area in-house as per the current Building Warrant application. They anticipate these works would be complete by the end of the calendar year (2021) or shortly thereafter provided that a building warrant can be obtained. These works would represent a completely different scope to that previously agreed by Committee. They have been confirmed as not delivering against the requirements of the Arts and Heritage service, or the requirements previously agreed by Committee, in terms of the functionality of a professional gallery. The most obvious omission would be that without environmental controls to manage light, temperature and humidity, officers would have a concern over the ability to show elements of the Council's fine art collection, particularly the Scottish Colourists which are works on paper. In addition it would inhibit any aspiration to ever borrow works in future from other galleries to augment the displays. This option is not recommended by officers for the reasons outlined at 4.8 and 4.11 but is presented in this report to allow Committee the opportunity to consider the full range of options available.

Gallery accessibility

- 4.12.** The works to the interconnecting galleries also require a decision from Committee. The recommendation from officers is that they continue in order to make the building as accessible as possible.

5 People Implications

- 5.1** There are no people implications with this report.

6 Financial & Procurement Implications

- 6.1** This report has been prepared at short-notice in order to meet the Committee deadlines linked to the Special Committee. As a result it has not been possible to provide detailed costings for the works contained within the report at this time.
- 6.2** Should Committee agree to proceed with the recommendations then officers would plan to bring an update to a future Committee with revised figures to take

account of the additional works and the volatile costs currently being experienced within the construction industry as a result of Brexit and Covid-19. Any additional investment would come from the Cultural Capital Fund which currently has more than £1,000,000 unallocated. Officers believe the scale of works outlined in this report could be delivered within that unallocated budget.

6.3 Should Committee agree to proceed with Option 2 or 3 then officers would initially work within the existing £950,000 agreed in February 2021. Option 2 would require a significant revision given the gallery work would no longer be progressing.

6.4 In March 2018 the Council created a £4m Cultural Capital Fund. This table illustrates the projects and costs agreed to date from this Fund:

Project	Cost
Alexandria Library museum, lift and new public-use room	£330,000
Town Hall external roof and stonework	£252,000
Town Hall Investment Project	£60,000
Town Hall renovations	£950,000
Clydebank Library basement museum	£575,000
Bruce Street Baths upgrade	£100,000
Town Hall/Dalmuir gallery redesign feasibility	£16,000
Fine Art Acquisition Fund	£100,000
Asset Management Development costs to support the Cultural Capital Projects	£75,350
Dalmuir Gallery renovations	£541,000
Town Twinning	£500
Total	£2,999,850
Funding left for other projects	£1,000,150

- 6.5** A procurement project is already underway to support delivery of the specification approved in February 2021. Any procurement will be done in line with financial regulations and relevant procurement legislation.
- 6.6** 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 contingency for this project to deal with unexpected costs.
- 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 updating the budget if all recommendations are agreed to include a significant contingency, or working within the £950,000 if not; 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, Corporate Communications and the Town Hall.

10 Strategic Assessment

- 10.1** The proposals within this report support the following strategic priorities:
- Efficient and effective frontline services that improve the everyday lives of residents.

Malcolm Bennie
Chief Officer Citizen, Culture & Facilities
Date: 30 September 2021

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Appendix: None

Background Papers: [Clydebank Town Hall Redevelopment Update. Report by Chief Officer CCF, August 2021;](#)
[Clydebank Town Hall Revised Improvement Works. Report by Chief Officer CCF, January 2021;](#)
[Redesign of Clydebank Town Hall Exhibition Galleries. Report by Chief Officer CCF, November 2020;](#)
[Business Case for Clydebank Town Hall Improvement Works. Report by Chief Officer CCF, November 2019;](#)
[Business Case for Clydebank Town Hall Improvement Works. Report by Chief Officer CCF, April 2019;](#)
Administration Budget 2018-19 to Council on 5 March 2018.

Wards Affected: All wards