

**REPORT TO ENVIRONMENT AND  
ECONOMY OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY PANEL**

Agenda  
Item:  
**A.4**

Meeting Date: 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014  
Portfolio: Economy, Enterprise and Housing  
Key Decision: No  
Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes  
Public / Private: Public

Title: TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE  
Report of: DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
Report Number: ED 41 14

**Purpose / Summary:**

**To provide Members with an update on Phase 2 of the Old Town Hall Scheme, Carlisle.**

**Recommendations:**

**The Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to:**

- 1. Note and support delivery of the Phase 2 upgrade works in line with ongoing actions, including the agreed delegation for the appointment of a Main Contractor to the Director of Economic Development, subject to delivery in accordance with Key Decision EX.108/13 dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2013.**
- 2. To note the recent performance of the Tourist Information Centre following completion of Phase 1 repairs and restorations and to support ongoing proposals to develop its future role and performance.**

**Tracking**

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 To update the Overview and Scrutiny Panel on ongoing actions to appoint a main contractor with recognised conservation skills, to undertake alterations, repair, restoration and specialist fit-out works which will help develop the role of the Old Town Hall as a visitor attraction whilst offering the services and facilities associated with a high quality strategic Tourist Information Centre. The works will include comprehensive upgrading of the existing Tourist Information Centre including the installation of multi-media equipment, display fitments and desk installations with improved access from street level to the first floor and increased use of the adjacent Assembly Room.
- 1.2 The proposed works incorporate key decisions agreed at the Member / officer workshop on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 2013 with particular reference to access arrangements and use of the Assembly Room.
- 1.3 The Phase 2 project follows on from the Phase 1 restoration and repair works completed in June 2013 at a cost of circa £500,000 with the support of English Heritage grant funding through their PSICA Programme for Carlisle.
- 1.4 The completed project did not however include substantial features of the original project as drawn up in 2010, which now form the subject of this tender exercise.
- 1.5 In September 2013, the Council approved release of £797K capital funding to facilitate appointment of a main contractor to complete recommended site works, as agreed by the Project Steering Group and Members, under the leadership of the Director of Economic Development. The Group comprises officers from Tourism Support, Property Services, Economic Development, ICT and Building Facilities supported by an externally appointed specialist building conservation and fit-out team led by Johnston and Wright Chartered Architects.

## 2 PROPOSALS

- 2.1 Following a two stage tender exercise undertaken by Johnston and Wright using the City Council's CHEST system, three tenders were received before the tender return date of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014.
- 2.2 The recommended contract award is based on a 50: 50 Price / Quality split.
- 2.3 Subject to the outcome of an ongoing arithmetical / compliance check against the specification, **the submitted tenders are within the approved capital budget** for the works. A recommendation for the 'Award of Contract' will be made upon completion of this appraisal exercise, subject to the scheme being viable in terms of delivery within the agreed budget.

2.4 The Project Steering Group will continue to monitor progress against the key activities as detailed below:

Programme Activities	Period
Tender Period – Fit Out. PQQ and Main Tender	July to September 2014
Tender evaluations	October to November 2014
Confirmation of Planning, Listed Buildings, Advertising and Building Regulations consents.	October 2014
Recommendation and appointment of Main Contractor.	November to December 2014
Decision and progression of temporary accommodation for relocation of the Tourist Information Centre.	November 2014
Contractor mobilisation period	December 2014
Tourist Information Centre relocate to alternative accommodation	January to July 2015
Site Works – Building Construction. Administration and Inspections.	January to April 2015
Site Works – Fit Out. Administration and Inspections	April to July 2015
Completion and Handover	July 2015
Tourist Information Centre and Assembly Room re-open to the public.	July 2015
Defects Resolution	July 2015 to June 2016
Release of Final Certificate	August 2016
Final Account – Target date	December 2016

2.5 In parallel with appointment of the main contractor, Property Services are assisting the Tourist Information Centre Manager on the sourcing of temporary alternative accommodation for the 6 month period of site works between January and July 2015. A final decision will be co-ordinated with a decision on the ‘Award of Contract’ in November 2014.

2.6 Post Phase 2 completion figures for visitor numbers and income are subject to ongoing review by the Tourist Information Centre Manager, to reflect a positive reversal against previously reducing baseline figures following completion of the Phase 1 works. This information together with feedback from the visitor survey and increased use of the Assembly Room will be reviewed to ensure that management and operational arrangements are put in place to build upon the high standards and good reviews of the Tourist Information Centre by developing its role as an information hub for Carlisle’s historic, cultural and visitor assets.

2.7 In parallel with the above, progression of the Phase 2 project will also ensure that the City Council supports private sector growth in the visitor economy by maximising the use of the Old Town Hall following completion of the Phase 1

repair and restoration works in June 2013. This will be achieved by the targeted Improvement in the quality of the offer and service standards which will help Increase visitor numbers, spend and overnight stays by increasing the attractiveness of Carlisle as a visitor destination.

### **3. CONSULTATION**

- 3.1 The Phase 2 works have been developed by the Project Steering Group to take account of recommended improvements not covered by the completed Phase 1 project. This has required further analysis and agreement with Members of options for access improvements and use of the Assembly Room. The agreed works now form the basis of main contractor tenders returned on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014.
- 3.2 Following Pre-application consultations and submissions, statutory consents for Planning, Listed Building, Advertising and Building Regulations have been submitted for approval.

### **4. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 Members are asked to note the content of the report in order that they are aware of and understand ongoing actions to deliver the Phase 2 upgrade works, including appointment of a main contractor and progression of the project onto site.

### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO THE CARLISLE PLAN PRIORITIES.**

- 5.1 The project will directly support the priority to **‘develop vibrant sports, arts and Cultural facilities, showcasing the City of Carlisle’** by enhancing the attractiveness of the Old Town Hall to tenants, visitors and users.

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#### **Appendices**

**Attached to report: n/a**

**Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:**

- **None**

### **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS/RISKS**

**Chief Executive's -**

**Deputy Chief Executive –**

**Economic Development –**

**Governance –**

**Local Environment –**

**Resources –**