

Decision Ref No:

EX.125/08

Subject Matter:

TULLIE HOUSE GOVERNANCE OPTIONS AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Head of Culture and Community reported (CS.26/08) on options for the future governance and operation of Tullie House. The Head of Service reminded Members that consideration had been given to future options for the City Museum and Art Service a number of times over recent years, and the Council had agreed to consider further the governance issues once the Development Plan on improving the facility was progressed. The Heritage Lottery Fund had now given approval for a development grant to submit an application for funding which was being progressed. He added that an ongoing issue for the Council in recent years had been the costs of providing the Museum and Arts Service, and this represented a significant capital and revenue investment for the City. The Head of Service added that the Museum itself, although the subject of major capital investment, now required a significant overhaul to enable it to compete for customers and, earlier work had identified a potential scheme of £14m although it had been recognised that such expenditure was beyond the resources of the City Council alone.

The Head of Service added that devolving the service to a Trust would provide potential for making access to capital funds from external bodies easier than was the case for a directly run Council service. He reminded Members that Carlisle Leisure had been established as a Trust but pointed out that the key difference in the case of Museum services was that there was no flourishing market providers and the normally accepted route for Museums was to devolve the service to a charitable body.

The Head of Service set out for Members possible reasons for moving the service to a Trust and added that the main consideration behind any decision about the future of the service, should be how the public interest could best be served. He added that Tullie House sat at the historic core of the City and the arrangements being progressed through Carlisle Renaissance were designed to add maximum value to this part of the City and a Trust could be an ideal vehicle to work with other partners. He added that whilst the option of a Trust will provide a different way of delivering a service, the Council would nonetheless remain a major partner to the Trust, and would work with the Trust at a strategic level to ensure that the service delivered the Council's objectives. He reminded Members of the National Policy Agenda which would influence this decision and also outlined the extent of the current Museum and Art Service.

The Head of Culture and Community reminded Members that the service was historically the Regional centre for Cumbria and had over 50 full time staff involved in delivering services to locals and visitors. It was seen as an important asset for Carlisle which ensured the care and interpretation of Carlisle's culture and heritage as well as providing a popular visitor attraction. Visitor trends had been fairly consistent, although it was considered that unachievable income targets had been set. He suggested that the Carlisle City Council Museum and Arts had the potential to be a centre for excellence for the North West Region and identified a number of regional links which had been developed as part of the North West hub.

He also added that Carlisle was located on Hadrians Wall and this was an essential and important aspect of the Museum Service and had yet to be fully explored but the work of the Hadrians Wall Heritage Company would provide an excellent opportunity to develop this interpretative work and use the significant location of Tullie House at the western end of the wall.

He set out for Members options for the future delivery of the Museum and Art Service and identified for Members the different forms of development trust which could be established which could provide a means for moving the service away from Council control to an independent body.

The Head of Service set out for Members the financial issues, including the cost of the Museum and Art Service and the anticipated income for the year, the cost of rates, the position with regard to VAT, central administration costs, the one-off costs involved in setting up a Trust, and the position with regard to the Heritage Lottery fund. The Legal issues with regard to any contract between the City Council and a Trust and any implications with regard to the lease were also set out together with property issues and personnel related issues.

The Head of Service added that if it was the Council's wish to establish a Trust, the Council's control would be relinquished although it would be anticipated that this would enable alternative sources of external funding to be attracted to the service which were currently not available for local authorities. He added that devolution of the service to a Charitable Trust needed to be set in the context of the changing role of Local Government nationally, as well as the local picture where a vibrant Trust could add value to the development of the City alongside the University and Carlisle Renaissance.

He also added that a key issue for the organisation over the coming months would be the identification of suitable representatives to serve as a Chairman of the Trustees as those candidates would be imperative in achieving a successful Trust.

The Leader commented that Tullie House was one of the jewels in Carlisle's crown and it was essential that Tullie House was able to develop as part of the offer from the City, the investigation into the possibility of establishing a Trust was not about saving money but about maximising the possible investment in Tullie House and providing an opportunity for Tullie House to achieve management autonomy whilst involving the community in shaping Tullie House for the future.

Decision:

1. That approval in principle be given for the devolution of the full responsibility for delivering the Museum service to a charitable body (Trust) and the Executive authorise Officers to progress this work subject to a final report in the Autumn.
2. That a copy of the Director of Community Services' Report (CS.26/08) be forwarded to the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 12 June and the Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 5 June for their comment.
3. That the Executive request the Council to approve an initial budget of £50,000 to progress this first stage of the work.

**Key or Non-Key
Decision:**

Key

Key Decision Ref:

KD.012/08

Portfolio:

Learning and Development

Who made decision:

Executive

Date:

29-May-08

Reports and Background Papers considered:

Report by the Director of Community Services (CS.26/08), Tullie House Governance Options and Development Plan.

Reasons for Decision:

The need to resolve the governance issues for the Museum and Art Service has taken time to enable Members to fully consider the decision. This recommendation will ensure a decision is taken which will enable the issue of Trust to be moved forward.

Summary of Options rejected:

None

Interests declared

None

Date published

02-Jun-08

Urgent decision not subject to call in

No

Consent of Chairman/ Deputy Chairman of Council to Urgency:

Not applicable

Deadline for call-in:

9-Jun-08 at 1700

Implementation date if not called-in:

10-Jun-08

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny and Community Overview and Scrutiny.

Call-in notified to and date notified:

Approved for implementation on:
