

REPORT TO COUNCIL

Agenda
Item:

19(ii)

Meeting Date: 5th November 2013
 Portfolio: Environment and Economy
 Key Decision: Yes
 Within Policy and Budget Framework: Yes
 Public / Private: Public

Title: Old Town Hall – Phase 2 Update
 Report of: Director of Economic Development
 Report Number: ED 36 13

Purpose / Summary:

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

Recommendations:

The Members of the Council are asked to:

1. Approve the release of funding to deliver the project in line with the programme and budget outlined in this report.

Tracking

Executive:	
Overview and Scrutiny:	
Council:	

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1** The Old Town Hall is an iconic building situated in the centre of Carlisle. Over the years the ground floor of the building has remained in commercial and retail use whilst the grander public rooms at first floor level have accommodated a number of important civic functions, including most notably the Courts of Assize until 1861, the City's Magistrate Court until 1941 and Council Chamber and offices of the City of Carlisle Corporation until 1964.
- 1.2** The first floor currently has two public spaces, one of which is used as a Tourist Information Centre, and the other known as the Assembly Room which is currently used for meetings and functions. A number of retail and food and drink outlets are located on the ground floor.
- 1.3** Building maintenance works and building operations are the responsibility of Carlisle City Council's Buildings & Facilities Management team whilst ground floor tenancies are managed by its in-house property team.
- 1.4** A set of development proposals for the Old Town Hall were originally worked up in 2009/10 by a project team including City Council staff (Economic Development, Conservation, Property and Building Services), Cumbria Tourism & Carlisle Tourism Partnership with the support of an external design team.
- 1.5** The project resulted in a Conservation Management Plan, Options Appraisal document and a Preferred Option and Business Plan being prepared which recommended a comprehensive upgrade of the building and its facilities.
- 1.6** An overall funding package was proposed including City Council capital, an HLF bid, funding from the North West Development Agency and from English Heritage. The bid to HLF was rejected in December 2010 and as a result of closure of the Regional Development Agencies, NWDA funding was also withdrawn.
- 1.7** Since 2010 the condition of the fabric of the Old Town Hall has continued to deteriorate. This has necessitated progression of a Phase 1 repair project to address structural and weatherproofing problems identified in the Conservation Management Plan, thereby protecting the building for ongoing usage. In addition, some internal refurbishment has been carried out to the area occupied by the Tourist Information Centre and Assembly Room, including redecoration, new internal lighting and carpet.

1.8 The 'Repair and Restoration' project was drawn up and agreed by the City Council's Full Council in November 2012. This work has now been completed on site in June 2013 with the support of English Heritage grant funding through their PSICA scheme for Carlisle.

1.9 The completed project does not however include substantial features of the original project as drawn up in 2010, which now form the subject for the Phase 2 project.

2. PROPOSALS

2.1 The purpose of the Phase 2 project is to:

- a. Develop the role of the Old Town Hall as a gateway to Carlisle's Historic and cultural attractions, orientating visitors and show casing key historic and visitor assets by an upgrade of the existing Tourist Information Centre with improved access from street level to the first floor and increased use of the adjacent Assembly Room'.
- b. The Tourist Information Centre will act as the strategic hub for visitors coming to explore Carlisle and the adjacent regions. It will provide the obvious starting point for their journey, whether it is a short walk around the Historic Centre of Carlisle, or exploring further afield to Hadrian's Wall, Lake District or Scotland. Local attractions include Carlisle Castle, Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery Carlisle Cathedral and Guild Hall.
- c. It will be at the centre of the wider visitor interpretative network and will act as a hub for visitors wishing to explore Carlisle and beyond. The overall aim of the interpretation at the Tourist Information Centre is to inspire and inform visitors. It will provide part of the experience, not just information.
- d. Given the breadth of the audience, consideration will need to be given to employment of a range of media to communicate the information and interpretation to the widest possible audience. The 'Carlisle Story' will be an integral part of this experience. From simple leaflets to AV presentation, the media must be practical, easy to use and able to connect with other local tourist hubs.
- e. Improved public realm and signage outside the Old Town Hall will also form part of the story and will need to reflect a quality experience and welcome to Carlisle.

- f. The overall intention is to modernise the service, to be more interactive and be more customer friendly. Any changes must aim to make the service fit for purpose for at least the next 15 years, so must be 'future proof' and stand the test of time.

3. PROJECT SCOPE

3.1 A Project Steering Group has been established to oversee delivery of the project. The project approach is for the Steering Group to review previously considered options and develop proposals for improvements to the building and public realm not covered by the completed Phase 1 project. This will include:

a. Restoration and upgrade of the building;

- Reworking the ground floor of the building, to accommodate a DDA and Fire Escape route compliant access from street level to the first floor including upgraded lobby, lift, staircase and disabled toilet facilities;
- Alterations to first floor circulation and service areas to access the Tourist Information Centre and Assembly Room.
- Progression of works identified as 'priority' repairs in the Conservation Management Plan which were not progressed as part of the Phase 1 contract. Further intrusive survey work will be required, to allow a greater understanding of evident defects which will need to be addressed as part of the Phase 2 project.

b. Retention and upgrading of the Tourist Information Centre in its current location

- Enhanced Tourist Information facilities providing an 'information hub' on the 'Carlisle Story', local history, attractions, festivals, events and accommodation in Carlisle and the surrounding area;
 - As existing - bookings, tickets, enquiries;
 - Information hub;
 - Potential for enhanced retail;
 - Increased advertising opportunities for Carlisle events and businesses;
 - High quality of service standards;
 - AV enabled;
 - IT enabled;
 - DDA compliant.

c. Restoration of the Assembly Room

- Improvements to the Assembly Room to support its use as a City Centre venue for exhibition and meeting space, to compliment the Tourist Information Centre and support the viability of the Old Town Hall;
 - City Centre Meeting venue and Exhibition Space;
 - Audience up to 50;
 - Flexible formats and layout;
 - Full range of AV equipment;
 - Fully IT enabled;
 - DDA compliant.

d. External upgrades:

- Improved exterior signage and feature flood lighting to the building;
- External public realm improvements to the area in front of the building with enhanced links to the Historic Quarter and wider tourism offer.

3.2. In summary the project will result in:

- Significantly improved and enhanced access for visitors, including the creation of an enhanced Ground Floor Public Entrance Foyer, with full access to the VIC and Assembly Room for wheelchair users improving the building's DDA compliancy.
- Reinstatement of the historic shop front between Costa Coffee and the external stair.
- Improvement of disabled WC facilities.
- Reinstatement of the original bright open space of the former Committee Room No 1 incorporating a new glass lift and timber stair.
- Refurbishment of the Assembly Room to provide a venue for meetings, weddings and exhibition etc.
- Removal, relocation and replacement of existing tired sales and exhibition stands, hanging exhibits, furniture, fittings and equipment and reception fitment.
- Comprehensive upgrading of facilities and services associated with a Strategic Visitor Information Centre (VIC) as set out in Cumbria Tourism's Strategic and Destination VIC's standards.
- More cost effective operation of the service with improved revenue generating potential.

3.3 Whilst a previous design team was appointed for the 2009/10 review, due to the time gap further procurement exercises will be required to appoint a specialist design team and contractor to help develop and deliver the Phase 2 project.

4. PROGRAMME

4.1 The Project Steering Group will work to the initial programme set out below. This will be further refined as the project develops.

- Steering Group Inception Meeting 11th July 13
- Executive approves release of funding for the project 30th Sept 13
- Overview and Scrutiny Panel consider the project 17th Oct 13
- Co-ordinating consultant 'Invitation to Tender' issued 23rd Oct 13
- Receipt of tenders 4th Dec 13
- Co-ordinating consultant appointed 8th January 14
- Commencement of Stage 1: 'Development of Detailed Proposals' 9th Jan14
- Stage 1 'Final Project Plan' approved 19th March 14
- Commencement of Stage 2: Implementation 24th March 14
- Statutory Applications submitted 4th April 14
- Building work Stage 1 Expressions of Interest issued 9th April 14
- Evaluation and short listing 16th May 14
- Stage 2 Building work tenders issued 6th June 14
- Statutory approvals June 14
- Building work tenders returned 18th July 14
- Main Contractor appointed + mobilisation period Aug – Sept 14
- Phase 2 works commence on site 8th Oct 2014
- Phase 2 works completed 31st March 15
- End of Defects Period / Final Account 31st March 16

The programme will also include a workshop with Members in November on options.

5. BUDGET

5.1 A capital budget was allocated as part of the 2013/14 budget process for Phase 2 works to the Old Town Hall and the surrounding areas of the Greenmarket of £1,500,000 in 2014/15.

5.2. The Executive approved on 30th September 2013 re-profiling and release of funding of £798,000, profiled £62,000 in 2013/14, £698,000 in 2014/15 and £38,000 in 2015/16 to commence work on the Phase 2 project in line with the programme outlined in this report and budget breakdown detailed below:

To enable the forecast main capital expenditure to be fully expended during 2014/15, a provisional budget of £125,000 has been approved to cover project management fees and appointment of a project team from October 13. The budget(s) will be reviewed and adjusted as project content and costs are developed / confirmed

£000's	Year 1 2013/14	Year 2 2014/15	Year 3 2015/16	Total
Capital				
Building works		635	33	668
Fees: Professional - external	50	45	5	100
Professional - internal	12	13		25
LA fees: Planning & Bldg		5		5
Sub total: Capital	62	698	38	798
Revenue				
Temporary relocation costs TIC		10		10
Loose furniture and fittings		10		10
Tenant – relocation / compensation costs		15		15
Sub total: Revenue		35		35
Total				833

5. CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The Members of the Council note progress on the preparatory work for Phase 2 Improvements to the Old Town Hall and support ongoing actions to deliver the project.
- ii. To ensure that the City Council maximises the use and commercialism of the Old Town Hall following completion of the Phase 1 Repair and Restoration works including developing its role as an information hub for Carlisle's historic, cultural and visitor assets.

Contact Officer: Jane Meek

Ext: 7190

**Appendices
attached to report:**

EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2013

EX.108/13 OLD TOWN HALL
(Key Decision – KD.022/13)

Portfolio Economy and Enterprise

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel Environment and Economy

Subject Matter

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder submitted report ED.27/13 updating Members on the position following completion of the Phase 1 repair project to the Old Town Hall.

In terms of the project scope, the Portfolio Holder explained that the original Feasibility Study and Business Plan report recommended retention of the Tourist Information Centre in its current location; creating a new public entrance area on the ground floor; and securing improvements to the Assembly Room to support its use as a City Centre venue for exhibition and meeting space. The following areas had been selected by the Steering Group from that Study for further review:

- Restoration and upgrade of the building
- Retention and upgrading of the Tourist Information Centre in its current location
- External upgrades

A previous design team had been appointed for the 2009/10 review however, due to the time gap, a further procurement exercise would be required to appoint a specialist design team to help develop and deliver the Phase 2 works.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder said that there were advantages and disadvantages with each option. It was therefore proposed that the Council enter into negotiations in order to establish the best team to develop and deliver Phase 2 of the project.

As part of the development of the project it was further proposed that options would be drawn up which would form the basis for discussion at a Member / Officer Workshop. Items for discussion included access; IT; signage; and use of the Assembly Room.

Members' attention was also drawn to Section 2 of the report which set out details of the initial programme and budget implications. It should also be noted that consideration was being given to other possible sources of funding in mitigation of the Council's costs.

In conclusion, the Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder moved the recommendations which were seconded by the Leader.

Summary of options rejected None

DECISION

That the Executive:

1. Noted progress on the preparatory work for Phase 2 Improvements to the Old Town Hall and supported recommended ongoing actions to deliver the project.
2. Approved for recommendation to Council, the re-profiling and release of funding of £797,000, profiled £62,000 in 2013/14, £698,000 in 2014/15 and £38,000 in 2015/16 to commence work on the Phase 2 in line with the programme outlined in Report ED.27/13.

Reasons for Decision

To ensure that the City Council maximised the use and commercialism of the Old Town Hall following completion of the Phase 1 Repair and Restoration works including developing its role as an information hub for Carlisle's historic, cultural and visitor assets