
EXCERPT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE HELD ON 3 SEPTEMBER 2012

EX.113/12 OLD TOWN HALL – APPROVAL OF ADDITIONAL CAPITAL TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF PREFERRED REPAIR AND IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME
(Key Decision – KD.031/12)

Portfolio Economy and Enterprise; Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People

Relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel Environment and Economy

Subject Matter

Pursuant to Minute EX.035/12, the Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder submitted report ED.30/12 updating Members on the preparatory work for substantial repairs to the Old Town Hall; seeking approval to the release of further City Council capital funding to carry out such work; and enabling access to grant funding for eligible parts of the work from English Heritage.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder outlined the background to the matter (including details of the original budget position), the position as at March 2012 and the current position.

He explained that, in anticipation of an early response from English Heritage and to enable the scheme to be progressed through detailed design, tender process and supervision of the works, the City Council had appointed Johnson and Wright in early April as the scheme architect. That was undertaken with the full agreement of English Heritage and envisaged a start on site date in early September 2012.

As part of the commission Johnson and Wright carried out a full condition survey of the building and, in line with the previous Conservation Management Plan, recommended that a full repair to the roof be carried out. Because of the ever deteriorating state of the building they had also recommended an additional number of repair items taking the overall cost of the scheme to £490,200 (the previous total cost being £428,565).

English Heritage formally responded to the Referrals Application on 22 May 2012 indicating that a proportion of the proposed works to the building as set down in the Referrals Application, and with particular reference to a full re-slating of the roof and stonework replacement, could not be justified from a building conservation point of view. Accordingly some works were not eligible for PSICA grant funding. English Heritage had also now withdrawn the £40,000 funding originally offered from the Historic Buildings, Monuments and Designed Landscapes stream.

Upon receipt of English Heritage's response to the Referrals Application, Johnson and Wright were instructed to further review the previously submitted Schedule of Works and cost plan to fully understand the options for the repairs scheme (that also included a review of the 2011 A L Daines Structural Report). A L Daines had also now recommended that full re-slating was their preferred option.

The Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder set out details of those options and their effect on the level of City Council capital contribution, namely:

- i) Complete scheme including full re-slating; and
- ii) Limit the repairs and refurbishment works to accommodate the existing City Council budget

He further outlined the revised programme for the project as detailed at section 4.2 of the report.

In conclusion, the Economy and Enterprise Portfolio Holder emphasised the importance of ensuring that the building was water tight and moved the recommendations set out in the report.

Referring to the future utilisation and commercialisation of the Old Town Hall (Section 5) the Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder reported that the Executive would revisit the original scheme, including a new entrance lobby at ground floor and enhanced access by way of a new lift to serve a substantially upgraded Tourist Information Centre.

She added that was in line with the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group currently looking at the future development of the TIC and how it could provide a more commercially orientated and modern service. The Task Group was due to complete its work and recommendations by November 2012.

The Culture, Health, Leisure and Young People Portfolio Holder then seconded the recommendations.

Summary of options rejected Option ii)

DECISION

That the Executive:

1. Approved Option (i) and noted the revised capital project for the Old Town Hall at a total cost of £490,200, noting that it related to reduced grant from English Heritage and additional City Council match funding;
2. Recommended that the City Council agree to the additional City Council match funding of £109,400 to be vired from the 2012/13 capital programme as set out in Report ED.30/12;

3. Agreed the revised programme of delivery of the project that now proposed a start on site in January 2013, and a completion date of June 2013, subject to the agreement of English Heritage.

Reasons for Decision

In order to ensure that:

- (i) The City Council secured and maximised the grant funding available in support of the repair / restoration works to the Old Town Hall
- (ii) The fullest possible repairs and refurbishment scheme is completed in one phase thus allowing the City Council to work from a firm base in looking at future options for maximising the use and commercialisation of the Old Town Hall building
- (iii) The full extent of work could be carried out and completed within the lifetime of the English Heritage grant before the end of March 2013