
Report To:	Education and Communities Committee	Date:	30 October 2018
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/102/18/GM/AW
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Subject:	Heritage Hub Timeline		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Education and Communities Committee of the timescales in respect of the closure of the temporary “pop-up” library, archive and museum in Cathcart Street (the Heritage Hub), the re-instatement of the Watt Library, Inverclyde Archives and the McLean Museum and Art Gallery in the Watt Complex in Kelly Street, and the re-opening of the latter building to the public.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Building works at the Watt Complex are nearing their conclusion, with the building due to be handed back to the Council in December 2018, at which point the library, archive and museum staff team will be required to re-instate the building and collections in time for public opening in 2019. It will not be possible to run a public service at the same time, therefore the Heritage Hub will close to the public on 21 December 2018.
- 2.2 The public will have access to limited library and archive services from Greenock Central Library during the period after the Hub has closed but before the Watt Complex has reopened. There will also continue to be outreach heritage activity through the *Stories Frae the Street* project with a Heritage Outreach Officer, a Heritage Apprentice, and a Digital Storyteller continuing to work with community groups throughout the period when there is no physical service point.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the likely timescales of the closure of the Heritage Hub, the re-instatement of the Watt Library, Inverclyde Archives and McLean Museum and Art Gallery, and the re-opening of the Watt Complex to the public.
- 3.2 That the Committee refers the report to Inverclyde Council as Trustees of the Watt Institution for approval.

Ruth Binks
Corporate Director
Education, Communities and Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 At its meeting of 1 November 2016, the Education and Communities Committee approved the Watt Complex refurbishment proposals, the Library, Archive and Museum decant plan, and the closure period of the Complex to allow the contract work, decant and re-instatement to take place. At its meeting of 17 January 2017, the Education and Communities Committee agreed to the use of the Business Store in Cathcart Street, Greenock, as a temporary “pop up” Library, Museum and Archive for a period of approximately 1 year from Summer 2017.
- 4.2 The decant plan involved 3 levels of decant work: external storage for high value items; utilising, where possible, parts of the building unaffected by the contract work as a temporary store for the bulk of the museum collections; and on-site protection of items which would be too heavy and/or large to move. The decant process was managed in-house by the professional staff of the library, archive and museum. It commenced in January 2017 and finished in June 2017. The staff then spent July 2017 getting the Business Store ready to house a temporary “pop up” library, archive and museum. The Heritage Hub opened to the public in August 2017. The Hub has been a relatively popular addition to central Greenock’s “historic quarter” and has attracted around 38% of the usual footfall levels seen at the Watt Complex prior to its closure.
- 4.3 The building works are nearing their conclusion and the Watt Complex building is due to be handed back to the Council in December 2018. When the staff team have access once again to the building, the decant process will then happen in reverse. It is likely that the re-instatement process will take a similar amount of time to the decant process, e.g. 4-6 months. As the full staff team of 7.7 FTE will be required to re-instate the Kelly St building, it will not be possible to run a public service at the same time and therefore the Heritage Hub will close on 21 December 2018, in preparation for the re-instatement of the Watt Complex.
- 4.4 The re-instatement process will involve several stages. Items currently stored externally have to be returned to the Complex and carefully de-crated or unboxed. Objects then have to be selected for display or returned to inventoried storage. Seven areas of the Complex require to have displays or contents re-installed (the books in the Watt Library; archives in the Archives Room; permanent displays in the Museum balcony and the Museum ground floor, a temporary display in the Watt Hall and fine art displays in two art galleries). New displays will also require to be researched and labelled. The new Museum roof restores filtered daylight to the permanent display area in contrast to the previous opaque roof. Light levels will be surveyed and the results will determine the thematic reorganisation and redisplay of the Museum’s fine collections, ensuring their conservation for the future and opening up new opportunities to show material collected since the last refurbishment in 1990. In addition, spaces within the Complex have to be refitted for new uses, giving staff and members of the public increased access to the collections of the Watt Institution.
- 4.5 During the period after the Heritage Hub closes but before the Watt Complex re-opens, there will be continued heritage activity and public outreach. In 2017, Inverclyde obtained Great Place Scheme funding through the Heritage Lottery Fund to run a project called *Stories Frae the Streets*. The project has fully funded a new post (temp for 23 months) of Heritage Outreach Officer, who reports directly to the Service Manager – Libraries, Education Development and Arts and is working to connect heritage organisations in the area and piloting a range of methods of engaging new communities with heritage. This work will involve communities in the creation of an Inverclyde Heritage Strategy, key commemorative events including a James Watt focus for the bi-centenary of his death in 2019, artists’ residencies, and an apprenticeship programme designed to engage young people in heritage activities. In addition, Scottish Book Trust is funding a Digital Storyteller for Inverclyde, a 9 month post designed to work in Inverclyde’s communities to offer a platform to value the voices and experiences of a range of people from local communities traditionally least likely to participate or be represented in the cultural life and artefacts of the area. A Heritage Apprentice for 2018-19 has recently been appointed, and together with the Heritage Outreach Officer and Digital Storyteller, she will also be responsible for continuing heritage activity during the gap in service caused by the reinstatement period.
- 4.6 The service disruption profile is therefore as follows:

Time Period	Event
21 December 2018	The Heritage Hub closes to the public. Limited library and archive services will be available from Greenock Central Library. Greenock Philosophical Society continue to use Central Library for their 2018-19 lecture schedule.
January 2019 - Spring/Summer 2019	Library, archive and museum staff move, unpack, and prepare books, objects and artefacts for re-display or storage as appropriate.
Jan 2019 – ongoing	The <i>Stories Frae the Street</i> project (funded through the Heritage Lottery Fund Great Place Scheme) continues; the 2 funded posts of Heritage Outreach Officer and Heritage Apprentice will continue with community-based heritage activities.
Late spring/early summer 2019	The Watt Complex re-opens to the public with a gala launch event. The first major exhibition will be on the theme of James Watt as 2019 is the bi-centenary of his death.

4.7 The service will also use the closure period to conduct a service review, as the library, archive and museum opening hours, services offered, and staffing structures have not been reviewed in many years. The recommendations of the service review will be the subject of a future report to this Committee.

5.0 PROPOSALS

5.1 It is proposed that the Heritage Hub will close on 21 December 2018, that library, archive and museum staff will spend Jan 2019 – early Summer 2019 reinstating the building and collections, suitable for public opening in mid-2019. Limited library and archive services will continue to operate from Greenock Central Library, and outreach work with Inverclyde's communities, will continue during the gap in provision.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Finance

There are no financial implications contained in this report. The costs of the project are part of the Education and Communities Capital Programme.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A.					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact £000	Virement From (If Applicable)	Other Comments

Legal

- 6.2 The Head of Legal and Property Services comments that, as the Watt Institution is held and administered by the Council as Trustees, any recommendation of this Committee will require to be referred to the Trustees of the Watt Institution for approval.

Human Resources

- 6.3 The re-instatement work will be carried out by Watt Complex staff with additional support where required.

Equalities

- 6.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix

No This report does not introduce a new policy, function or strategy or recommend a change to an existing policy, function or strategy. Therefore, no Equality Impact Assessment is required.

Repopulation

- 6.5 The Watt Complex is a key part of Inverclyde's tourism, culture and heritage offer, providing significant services to visitors and residents of Inverclyde. The overall project has been an opportunity to invest significantly into one of Inverclyde's best regarded heritage assets.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.