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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>Education and Communities Committee</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5 November 2019</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>EDUCOM/82/19/AW</b>
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<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Watt Institution</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the opening date and revised opening hours of the Watt Institution.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Following a programme of extensive fabric repairs to the Watt Institution, staff regained access to the complex in April 2019 and since then have been reinstating the collections and displays. This work is now in its final stages.
- 2.2 With 2019 being the bicentenary of James Watt's death, the Council is hosting a special dinner to commemorate James Watt on Wednesday 20 November 2019 in Greenock Town Hall. Guests invited to the dinner, including Elected Members and senior officers of Inverclyde Council, members of the national James Watt bicentenary steering group, and selected individuals with a particular interest in James Watt or the Watt Institution have also been invited to a special preview of the refurbished Watt Institution earlier in the evening of 20 November. Thereafter, the Watt Institution will reopen to the general public on Friday 22 November at 10am.
- 2.3 The Watt Institution was subject to the Council's budget savings exercise as part of the 2019-20 budget setting process. As a result it has been necessary to review the hours of opening. The opening hours of the Museum and Watt Library have now been consolidated and will open to the public Wednesday–Saturday 10am–4pm. The rationale behind these changes to opening hours is provided later in this report.
- 2.4 The Watt Institution comprises the McLean Museum, the Art Gallery, the Watt Hall, and the Watt Library. This is not a renaming as the complex has always been formally named the Watt Institution and the legal name is being brought back into everyday use.

## 3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee notes the opening date and revised opening hours of the Watt Institution.

**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 Institution refurbishment proposals, the library, archive and museum decant plan, and the closure period of the complex to allow the contract work, decant and reinstatement to take place.
- 4.2 Staff regained access to the complex in April 2019 and since then have been undertaking work to reinstate the building. This has been a lengthy process due to the scale and complexity of the work required, including repatriating several thousand objects, books and archives from the collections which had been either stored externally or stored in a temporary store; inventory; selecting items for display or storage and new research and labelling for the contents of displays. Various works relating to the refurbishment have also continued during this time. This work is now in the final stages which will allow the service to reopen the building.
- 4.3 With 2019 being the bicentenary of James Watt's death, the Council is hosting a special dinner to commemorate James Watt on Wednesday 20 November 2019 in Greenock Town Hall. Guests invited to the dinner, including Elected Members and senior officers of Inverclyde Council, members of the national James Watt bicentenary steering group, and selected individuals with a particular interest in James Watt or the Watt Institution, have also been invited to a special preview of the refurbished Watt Institution earlier in the evening of 20 November. Thereafter, the Watt Institution will reopen to the general public on Friday 22 November at 10am.
- 4.4 The Watt Institution refurbishment was the subject of the Council's budget savings exercise as part of the 2019-20 budget setting process, during which Members agreed to remove £68,000 from the budget. It has been required, therefore, to review the hours of opening.
- 4.5 Prior to the closure for refurbishment, the McLean Museum was open Monday-Saturday 10am – 5pm (42 hours per week) and the Watt Library was open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 10am – 5pm and Wednesday, Saturday 10am – 1pm (34 hours per week). The service has now consolidated the opening hours of the Museum and Library and to open to the public Wednesday–Saturday 10am–4pm (24 hours per week). It is further proposed that when the Institution is closed to the public on a Monday and Tuesday, some staff will remain in the building to carry out outreach work with schools, community groups and volunteers and mounting/demounting of exhibitions. The rationale behind these revised hours is as follows:
- This is the maximum number of hours the revised revenue budget can support;
  - Statistics show that afternoons (up to 4pm) and Saturdays are the busiest times;
  - A 10am start is more suitable for cruise ship tourists than a later one;
  - A closure on consecutive days is less confusing for members of the public and is useful for staff for mounting and demounting exhibitions. The latter can no longer be done during opening hours because the Watt Hall is now part of the disabled access to the library and cannot be closed off; and
  - It would be difficult to recruit staff to work for a shorter number of hours per day over the course of more days.
- 4.6 Committee members should note that the overall complex is named the Watt Institution and that the Watt Institution comprises the McLean Museum, the Art Gallery, the Watt Hall, and the Watt Library. This is not a renaming as the complex has always been formally named the Watt Institution; rather the legal name is being brought back into everyday use, and this is reflected in the branding for the service.

## **5.0 IMPLICATIONS**

### **5.1 Finance**

There are no financial implications in this report.

## 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
N/A					

## **Legal**

- 5.2 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 information.

## **Human Resources**

- 5.3 The revised opening hours detailed in this report will have implications for Human Resources and these will be managed according to Council policy and procedure and in consultation with the Trades Unions.

## **Equalities**

- 5.4 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**

- 5.5 The Watt Institution is a key part of Inverclyde's tourism, culture and heritage offer, providing 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.

## **6.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 6.1 None.