
Report To:	Education & Communities Committee	Date:	05 May 2015
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities & Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/53/15/AE
Contact Officer:	Angela Edwards	Contact No:	01475 712828
Subject:	McLean Museum/Watt Library		

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of available options following the unsuccessful HLF bid last year. The report also asks for approval to appoint a temporary consultant/specialist secondee to undertake a full options appraisal on the future of 'James Watt Heritage Centre' and Inverclyde's cultural offer as a whole.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In January 2014, a bid for £7m was entered to Round 1, Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in the major batch category, the total cost of the project being £14m. The bid centred on the redesign and major refurbishment of the McLean Museum and Watt library to become the 'James Watt Heritage Centre'. Following the unsuccessful HLF Bid discussion and consideration have taken place around the possibility of a refreshed bid for the McLean Museum/Watt library.
- 2.2 The building presents significant challenges in relation to continuing to provide an attractive cultural offer including exhibitions / artefacts and local heritage. For example, the Watt Library and McLean Museum have separate access despite being co-located.
- 2.3 The HLF Board noted that the project aimed to conserve and safeguard the A-listed buildings, as well as the nationally and internationally important collections, the local history archive and the rare book collection. They were also impressed by Inverclyde's ambition to provide a greatly improved service for new and existing users. Additionally, they acknowledged that the project offered the potential to better explore the industrial, maritime, built and cultural heritage of an area of high deprivation. The Board also spoke positively about the learning and education aspects of the bid.
- 2.4 Areas for consideration which the Board fed back on the project included the limited possibilities for genuinely increasing Inverclyde's cultural offer within the existing building and the challenge of competing against national level projects in the £7m projects.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the intention to undertake a detailed options appraisal. This will further advise the Council on how best to secure the building's future and develop Inverclyde's cultural offer.
- 3.2 Members are asked to note and agree the appointment of a temporary consultant/specialist secondee for a period of 3 months to undertake the appraisal. This will be funded from the Budget Work Plan earmarked reserve.

- 3.3 Members are asked to note that officers are to report back to the Committee in September 2015 with the outcome of the options appraisal.

Patricia Cassidy
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The original HLF bid submitted was unsuccessful. It is useful to note that demand for funds means HLF cannot support every good application that achieves the outcomes of the programme. Their Board of Trustees had to take decisions on more projects than the available budget would allow and Inverclyde Council's application was rejected due to insufficient funds. Most projects at a similar level take a number of years to come to fruition and obtain grant assistance. It is very common to have a first 'Round 1' bid rejected. The process at that level (£5m+) is highly competitive and Inverclyde was bidding against projects from all over the UK, some from other local authorities and some from national museums and significant institutions.
- 4.2 There were 17 projects, totalling around £179m bidding for a funding pot of £50m (6 were successful in achieving funding). The pot available was not even able to fund every project classed as 'high priority' because it was so oversubscribed. The Board welcomed the Council's financial commitment (£4m) to the project. The Board indicated that they would welcome a re-application at a later date (this is not the case for all projects submitted).

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The building itself has significant challenges in relation to continuing to provide an attractive cultural offer including exhibitions / artefacts and local heritage. The Watt Library houses the local, family and archiving history aspects of Inverclyde heritage and the McLean Museum houses significant collections of local and global importance. Although both facilities share the same building, access to each is separate.
- 5.2 At present Inverclyde has a cultural offer which lacks coherence and presents pockets of good practice, while remaining fragmented across the area. This issue was identified by inspectors in a recent learning community inspection. The McLean Museum presents significant collections of global interest and is gradually developing a valuable archive and family history service. However, the restrictions of the McLean Museum site result in significant challenges in terms of improving and developing this building.
- 5.3 Cultural services in Inverclyde aim to create a cultural offer that:
- carries a strong sense of place
 - becomes a significant tourist attraction
 - contributes to repopulation and regeneration
 - provides opportunity for other funding streams
 - establishes a community outreach service
 - makes a significant contribution to learning through education programmes
- 5.4 If our aspirations are successful, Inverclyde Council would provide a cohesive cultural offer which creates a strong sense of place and identity in the local communities and instils a sense of pride in the local Museum Service and the area's heritage.
- 5.5 To do this would require undertaking a full mapping of the cultural baseline for Inverclyde. Further consultation with community stakeholders would be required to shape / improve services alongside the establishment of a possible 'Friends of' association. This could include opportunities for temporary exhibitions in different locations across Inverclyde.
- 5.6 The Council's generous commitment of £4m to this cultural development is essential as leverage for potential external funding bids.
- £126,000 of this funding has already been spent on condition surveys and technical expertise associated with the unsuccessful HLF bid. A further £153,000 has been committed to fund the essential dry rot work expected to be completed in 2015/16.
As a result the remaining funding has been reduced to £3.721m.
- 5.7 It is proposed that up to £25,000 is used from the Budget Work Plan earmarked reserve to fund a specialist consultant to review the options for the redevelopment of the site and investment in improving the cultural offer in Inverclyde.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

6.1 Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Earmarked Reserve	Budget Work Plan	15/16	Up to 25k		To fund consultant/specialist secondee

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

6.2 Legal

There are no legal implications

6.3 Human Resources

There are no HR implications at present

Equalities

6.4 Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out?

Yes See attached appendix. To follow.

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.

6.5 Repopulation

The project offers a unique opportunity to invest significantly into one of Inverclyde's best regarded heritage assets and extend and enhance the overall cultural offer of the area. It will also create learning, tourism, employment, volunteer and training opportunities. As such, it would be a key addition to the range of measures Inverclyde Council is taking to regenerate, and repopulate, the local area.

7.0 CONSULTATIONS

7.1 The CMT support the action proposed.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Members are asked to note the intention to undertake a detailed options appraisal. This will further advise the Council on how best to improve and develop Inverclyde's cultural offer.

8.2 Members are also asked to note and agree the appointment of a temporary consultant/specialist secondee for a period of 3 months. This consultant will undertake the full appraisal.

9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 None