
Report To:	Education and Communities Committee	Date:	01 November 2016
Report By:	Corporate Director Education, Communities and Organisational Development	Report No:	EDUCOM/73/16/AW
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Subject:	Watt Complex Refurbishment – Progress Report		

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is:

- 1.1 to inform the Education and Communities Committee about progress on the Watt Complex Refurbishment project, the necessary decant of library and museum archives, books and artefacts, and the likely service disruption period during the contract work.
- 1.2 to seek authority to tender for two phases of contract works and to grant delegated authority to the Head of Legal & Property Services to accept the lowest acceptable tenders for each phase provided the costs are within the budget allocation for the project.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 At its meeting of 08 March 2016, the Education and Communities Committee agreed to divert £2m from Council funds committed to the Watt Complex project to Reserves and to use the remaining £1.8m (Council funds) to address the immediate repairs that are required to make the Watt Complex safe and water-tight. The Watt Complex Design Team were requested to provide confirmation of which works could be undertaken within the £1.8m budget.
- 2.2 In August 2016, Historic Environment Scotland confirmed grant aid of up to £297,000 towards the Watt Complex refurbishment, increasing the overall budget available for the project to £2.1m.
- 2.3 The scope of works possible for £2.1m is to undertake emergency repairs to the parapets and towers, external fabric repairs including stone repairs and window replacement, and roof repairs including wet rot works and gutter repairs. This will include decanting of valuable artefacts and formation of safe stores on site for less valuable artefacts.
- 2.4 It is proposed to use 3 levels of decant to adequately protect the contents of the library and museum during the contract work: using an external storage company only for those items which due to value or fragility must be removed from the site; utilising spaces within the library and museum untouched by the builder work to retain as many archives, books and objects on site as possible, and protecting those large and heavy Museum artefacts which cannot be moved during the work.
- 2.5 It is proposed to use the existing staffing complement to prepare, pack and move (where possible) objects to protect them from harm during the contract work.
- 2.6 It is likely that the library and museum will have to close to the public for a period of 18 months to 2 years to allow the decant, contract work and re-instatement to take place, but it may be

possible to offer a service from an alternative delivery point yet to be determined.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Committee grant authority to proceed to tender for two phases of Works, and grant delegated authority to the Head of Legal & Property Services to accept the lowest acceptable tenders provided the costs are within the budget allocation for the project.
- 3.2 It is recommended that the Committee approve the decant plan and likely closure periods of the library and museum to allow the contract work, decant and re-instatement to take place and note that, subject to approval by the Watt Trust Trustees, Phase 1 of the decant will be funded from the Watt Trust Cy-pres scheme.
- 3.4 It is recommended that the Committee note that options for the potential temporary delivery of service during the closure of the Library and Museum will be presented to the January Committee.
- 3.5 It is recommended that the Committee note that officers are continuing to examine ways of funding further internal works to the Watt Complex and will bring reports back at the appropriate time.
- 3.6 It is recommended that the decision of the Committee is referred to the next meeting of the Inverclyde Council for noting as Trustees of the Watt Institution.

Wilma Bain
Corporate Director
Education, Communities & Organisational Development

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Over a number of years, the Grade A listed Watt Complex has experienced problems relating to the maintenance and repair of its buildings. Although major roof repairs have been carried out, there are continuing issues relating to the fabric of the building. Although the McLean Museum and Art Gallery was refurbished in 1990, the Watt Library has never had any refurbishment. Furthermore, a bid submitted in 2013 to seek partnership funding for a major refurbishment was unsuccessful. In 2015, architectural consultant Collective Architecture developed proposals for a project which both refurbished the complex and added significantly to the regeneration of the area through activities including learning, employment, volunteer and training opportunities, an improved tourism offer, and improved social capital. However, in order to address the unexpectedly wide funding gap faced by the Council as a result of the poorer than expected Scottish Government Grant settlement for 2016/17, the Corporate Management Team proposed that £2m from Council funds committed to the Watt Complex project should be diverted to Reserves and the remaining £1.8m (Council funds) should be used to address the immediate repairs that are required to make the Watt Complex safe and water-tight.
- 4.2 At its meeting of 08 March 2016, the Education and Communities Committee approved the amendment to the Watt Complex proposals and requested that the Watt Complex Design Team provide confirmation of which works could be undertaken within the £1.8m budget.
- 4.3 In August 2016, Historic Environment Scotland confirmed grant aid of up to £297,000 towards the Watt Complex Refurbishment. All aspects of the fabric repair are grant-eligible but work must be approved prior to issue of the contract.
- 4.4 Taking into account a total budget of £2.1m (£1.8m of Council funds and up to £0.3m grant from Historic Environment Scotland) the following works can be achieved to make the Watt Complex wind and water-tight:
- Emergency repairs to parapet and towers.
 - Accelerated works involving the replacement of timber windows, structural repair to parapets and towers, stone repairs to facades.
 - The main works to include roof repairs and wet rot works to the Library and repair of the roof and gutters to the Museum. This phase will expose the building to water ingress which can be mitigated by the use of a canopy and appropriate working practices but cannot be totally avoided. Decanting of the artefacts is therefore required.
- 4.5 The Works will be carried out in two phases with the first phase comprising parapet, tower and window replacement commencing in January. The second phase, main works, comprising roof repairs and wet rot works to commence in the summer.
- 4.7 It should be noted that while this project represents a very substantial investment in the Watt Complex, the budgetary envelope is not sufficient to fund the addition of a lift. On re-opening, there will still be no access to the upper floor of the Museum or the Art Gallery for visitors with limited mobility. Officers will continue to examine ways of funding a lift and other internal works and a report will be brought back to the Committee at the appropriate time.
- 4.8 The Phase 1 contract work is due to start onsite in January 2017. The collections of the Watt Library and McLean Museum are of national and international significance; their value and arguably their importance surpasses that of the building. The service would therefore decant archives, books and objects from the Watt Library and McLean Museum during the period of Phase 1 contract work where the interior is not open to weather. The Library and Museum would also close to the public to allow the contract work to take place.

5.0 DECANT PROPOSALS

5.1 In light of the tight budget for the contract work, the costs and time involved of fully decanting the library and museum are prohibitive and thus the service has worked to prepare a decant plan involving three levels of decant work as follows:

1. High value and particularly fragile objects will be stored externally by a storage company who can provide satisfactory security and environmental control. It is envisaged that 86 fine art works and ship models will require external storage. The estimated cost of external storage for one year is £61,000.
2. Utilisation, where possible, of the parts of the building which will be untouched by the contract work e.g. the current Art Gallery and the Main Store, and also other spaces already available to the service e.g. Kingston Unit 5, Central Library Basement Store, etc for archives, books and artefacts of lower value. There will be costs involved in racking out and protecting the floor of the Art Gallery, storage material e.g. plastic boxes, wrapping materials etc. These costs are likely to be in the region of £20,000.
3. Very heavy and large objects, for example a Bas-relief from the Great Temple of Bastet at Bubastis, would be protected from the contract work by having a frame built around them and being sealed in a waterproof container. The costs of this will be minimal and will be met by the main contract budget.

The total cost, therefore of the decant plan set out above, is £81,000, and it is proposed that the Phase 1 cost of £61,000 be met by funds from the Watt Trust. This will require approval by the Trustees at the next Full Council meeting on 1 December 2016.

An earlier quote obtained for decanting the full contents of the library and museum to external storage was £215,000, so there are considerable savings to be achieved in following the plan set out above.

5.2 The decant process would be managed by the Council's library, museum and archive professionals, with each member of the curatorial team being responsible for the collections in their charge. Other staff will assist, under supervision, to pack and move objects. This is a long and delicate process as some of the items are priceless, irreplaceable and fragile, including relics, antiques, artefacts and paintings. There must be a realistic amount of time dedicated to the decant to allow staff to pack and move the collections in an orderly fashion to mitigate risk to valuable items and to ensure that staff members' health and safety are not compromised by having to handle heavy, awkward and sometimes poisonous items in a rush. Items have to be recorded and logged as they are moved so that staff know where everything is at all times for audit purposes. The move also presents the opportunity to photograph and digitise collection items so that they will be accessible online when they are not available for direct viewing.

5.3 The current staffing complement for the Watt Complex is 8.8 FTE, comprising 3.6 FTE museum and archive professionals, 2 FTE library staff, and 3.2 FTE front-of-house museum staff. It will not be possible to run the public side of the service at the same time as decanting the books, archives and artefacts and therefore it will be necessary to close the library and museum, prior to the work taking place, for the duration of the work, and for a short period after the work for library and museum re-instatement.

6.0 LIBRARY AND MUSEUM CLOSURE PROPOSALS

6.1 The level of contract work being undertaken, and the resource-heavy nature of managing the decant in-house, gives a service disruption profile as follows:

Time Period	Event
Dec 2016	Library & Museum close to the public (Greenock Philosophical Society can continue to access Watt Hall until Feb 2017).
Jan-Summer 2017	-Limited Watt Library service offered from Central Library.

	-Museum staff prepare, pack, move objects for decant.
Summer 2017-Summer 2018	Alternative service delivery elsewhere or staff redeployed within the service. Watt Library provision could continue from Central Library.
Summer 2018-Autumn 2018	End of contract. Library & Museum contents re-instated.
Autumn 2018	Library & Museum re-open to the public.

Publicity surrounding the closure and ensuing works will be handled by Corporate Communications.

- 6.2 The McLean Museum is a polling station within the Council's approved Polling Scheme and it would be closed over the local election period in May 2017. Accordingly, the current position will be noted within the arrangements for review of the Polling Scheme to be considered later this year by the Council and there are alternative arrangements available within the neighbourhood of the polling district, as will be proposed to the Council at that time.

7.0 ALTERNATIVE PREMISES FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

- 7.1 It would be possible to run the library and museum service from an alternative delivery point for around 1 year of the contract work, from Summer 2017. Details of a suitable location, and anticipated costs, will be the subject of a further report to this Committee in due course.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Finance

The contract work and decant costs will be contained within the project budget and from Watt Trust funds. Staffing costs will be unaffected. Other revenue budget costs should be offset by the reduced cost of rates, utilities, exhibitions and goods for resale while the library and museum are closed. Costs of delivering services from an alternative location, and possible mechanisms for replenishing Watt Trust funds, including potential sales of artefacts, will be the subject of future reports to this Committee.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report £000	Virement From	Other Comments
Capital Programme	Watt Complex Refurbishment	From 2016	£1.8m		
Capital Programme	Watt Complex Refurbishment	From 2017	£0.3m		Funded by a grant from Historic Environment Scotland.
Watt Trust	Decant	From 2017	£61		Subject to approval by the Trustees.

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

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

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 noting.

8.3 Human Resources

The health & safety of library and museum staff carrying out the decant will be paramount. Should no alternative delivery location be available, the service will seek to temporarily redeploy all staff displaced by the contract work.

8.4 Equalities

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.

8.5 Repopulation

The McLean Museum and Watt Library form a key part of Inverclyde's tourism, culture and heritage offer, providing significant services to visitors and residents of Inverclyde. The project offers an opportunity to invest significantly into one of Inverclyde's best regarded heritage assets.

9.0 CONSULTATIONS

9.1 The Council's insurers, Zurich, have been consulted on the decant plans and have confirmed that they believe the logistics are being well-managed by the service and that the risk mitigations being put in place are satisfactory to them.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None