

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Education, Culture and Sport
DATE	28th March 2013
DIRECTOR	Gayle Gorman
TITLE OF REPORT	Museums Collections Centre – site appraisal
REPORT NUMBER:	ECS/13/026

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise the Committee on the recently undertaken Site Appraisals for the proposed new Museums Collections Centre.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

The Committee:

1. Notes that the site at Granitehill scored highest when marked against the agreed criteria detailed in the site options appraisal for the new Museums Collections Centre.
2. Agrees that should the ongoing negotiations with the University of Aberdeen result in other comparable options that meet the Council's requirements, enable closer partnership working and ensure that the Museums Collections Centre can be opened on time, that a report be brought to the earliest appropriate Committee.
3. Remits the report to the next meeting of the Finance and Resources meeting, seeking its support for the site to be transferred to the Education, Culture and Sport account, with agreement on the exact boundaries to have been agreed in advance between Education, Culture and Sport, and Enterprise, Planning and Infrastructure.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Council has committed £3m Non-Housing Capital funding to build, fit out and pay the fees for the Museums Collections. The expenditure will enable the Museums Collections Centre to be completed by December 2014 to accommodate the relocation of the collections displayed and stored in the Art Gallery, in early 2015.

3.2 Work is underway to assess the revenue implications, however these will not be concluded until the design and specifications are finalised. As it is also intended to relocate aspects of the current Gallery operations to

the Centre, this may offer flexibility in how the former operates. The revenue implications will also be assessed once the operation and management has been determined.

3.3 The logistics of the redevelopment programme will be considerable; staff already have considerable experience of the implications of relocating the Collections and emptying the Art Gallery will require considerable planning, preparation and care. The Art Gallery redevelopment costs will include the removal costs, as well as costs accounted against the replacement Museums Collections Centre.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There will be legal implications in terms of both financial and legal commitments the Council is being asked to make, including design, construction and related contracts.

4.2 The building designs will incorporate sustainable and other related environmental standards.

4.3 There will be staff implications in order to be able to deliver the movement and re-location of the Collection currently in the Art Gallery and then ongoing relocation of other parts of the Museums and Galleries Collection. The programme will result in the whole Collection, not on display, being housed in the new Museums Collections Centre, with the benefit of making space available at Kittybrewster and a unit at Crombie Road for re-use, in due course.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Following confirmation of funding, work has been underway to identify an appropriate site which will house the Museums and Galleries Collection and aspects of the service's work, which will be transferred from the Art Gallery, as part of the overall review of operational requirements. Both a Project Board and Project Team have been set up to ensure the project progresses to meet the tight timelines required. A range of sites across the city have been assessed against a number of objectives and suitability criteria in a site-based option appraisal. The site appraisal document is available in the Members Lounge.

5.2 The Museums Collections Centre has been included within a wider discussion about closer partnership working with the University of Aberdeen. The Centre is seen as a tangible way in which the partnership might be strengthened. The new Museums Collections Centre will provide an important space for the public to access, including a facility for learning and research. Other potential aims include regeneration within a community, the importance of which has been considered within the option appraisal. This report, however, can only deal with the Council's

assessment of potential sites; the University is currently considering the findings and will respond at an early date.

5.3 The Council's appraisal did include two sites close to the University Campus, one in the latter's and the other in the Council's ownership. As the Site Appraisal shows, the requirements assessed are those of the Council alone, before the University confirms its physical storage needs. The requirements assessed include the timescales to achieve a new build, current planning constraints and a range of other factors which present a limited number of options for the new Centre. Nevertheless, the Appraisal has identified the three sites that scored the highest, with one these scoring considerably higher.

5.4 While officers are keen to have the Granitehill site progressed, they are conscious of the benefits that closer working with colleagues in the University may offer. The recommendations identify the option that best satisfies the Council's requirements and would wish this site secured at this time. Should the University respond with strong, compelling arguments about other sites, not currently considered within the Site Appraisal, or any other proposals which might be beneficial and will continue to enable the Council's Collections Centre to be delivered on time, then it is proposed a report be brought to a subsequent appropriate Committee.

6. IMPACT

Corporate - This report relates to 'Aberdeen – the Smarter City', in particular:

- We will improve access to and increase participation in arts and culture by providing opportunities for citizens and visitors to experience a broad range of high quality arts and cultural activities.
- We aspire to be recognised as a City of Culture, a place of excellence for culture and arts by promoting Aberdeen as a cultural centre hosting high quality and diverse cultural events for the whole community and beyond.
- We will embrace the distinctive pride the people of Aberdeen take in their city and work with them to enhance the sense of well-being here, building strong communities which look out for, and look after one another.
- We aim to leave a legacy which will make compelling reading in a new chapter in the history of Aberdeen and we aim to do this with one voice.
- We will provide a high quality education service within our schools and communities which will improve attainment and life chances of our children and young people to achieve their full potential in education, employment or training.
- Working with our third, public and private sector partners, we will provide opportunities for lifelong learning which will develop

knowledge, skills and attributes of our citizens to enable them to meet the changing demands of the 21st century.

- We will aim to have a workforce across the city which has the skills and knowledge to sustain, grow and diversify the city economy.

There are also clear links with the delivery of the city's Cultural Strategy, "Vibrant Aberdeen" and the bid development to become UK City of Culture. It also has direct links to the city's Learning Strategy and in supporting the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence.

In terms of the Single Outcome Agreement, the programme contributes to Outcome 3, "We are better educated, more skilled and more successful, renowned for our research and innovation" and Outcome 13, 'We will take pride in a strong, fair and inclusive national identity'. The new SOA guidance for Community Planning Partnerships includes inclusion of the following key national priorities as appropriately, including particular focus on how local inequalities of outcome will be reduced through a clear strategic focus on the:

- Early years and early intervention
- Outcomes for older people
- Employment
- Economic recovery and growth
- Health inequalities
- Safer and stronger communities

The Programme offers opportunities to contribute to a number of these, particularly in partnership.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Aberdeen Art Gallery Redevelopment Programme, Urgent Business Committee, 29th November 2012.

Aberdeen Art Gallery redevelopment, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 7th June 2012 and Finance and Resources Committee, 21st June 2012.

Condition and Suitability Programme 2012-13, Finance and Resources Committee 15th March 2012.

Cultural Priorities 2011-2015, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 24th March 2011.

Progress report on proposals to redevelop Aberdeen Art Gallery, 18th November 2010.

Finance and Resources Committee, 17th June 2010, referral of report from the Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 27th May 2010.

Progress report on proposals to redevelop Aberdeen Art Gallery and report on improving access to the Museums and Galleries collections, Education, Culture and Sport Committee, 27th May 2010.

Best Value Report on Museums and Galleries Service, Education and Leisure Committee, 16th May 2006.

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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