

FC20. ASSET RATIONALISATION - COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS PROJECT

Council considered a report by the Director of Development Services on the progress with the Council headquarters project and setting out a proposal to develop a new Town Hall in conjunction with Falkirk Community Trust and Forth Valley College.

Council had agreed, on 8 October 2014 (ref FC35), to progress the project following consideration of a business case.

An update on progress to date was provided, together with detail on a programme of consultation and engagement with staff and the public which started on 11 May 2015 and was due to end on 31 July. The report also summarised current workstreams in regard to:-

- communications;
- Information Technology;
- document management;
- property issues;
- human resources and change management; and
- finance.

It is intended that the new headquarters facility will accommodate staff currently based in Abbotsford House, Falkirk. The current lease for Abbotsford House will expire on 28 March 2016 with the current completion date for the new headquarters scheduled for spring 2017. It was proposed to extend the lease at a cost of £200,000.

Council had also agreed, on 8 October 2014, to continue with a detailed options appraisal analysis of potential sites and funding sources, and the development of a business case, for a replacement Town Hall in conjunction with Falkirk Community Trust. A proposal to co-locate the facility within a Forth Valley College campus was set out. It was recommended that Council enter into an agreement with Forth Valley College to examine this further.

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Baillie Paterson, moved that Council agrees to:-

- (1) note progress with Stage 1 design of the HQ project, the associated workstreams and the consultation, as agreed by Members at the meeting of Full Council on 8 October 2014, currently taking place;
- (2) extend the existing lease of Abbotsford House for a period of 12 months, with the option of 3 monthly extensions thereafter on the basis of an annual rental of £200,000;
- (3) participate in the business case and option appraisal exercise taking place involving Forth Valley College and Falkirk Community Trust in order to consider the optimum approach to provision of a replacement Town Hall/arts facility; and
- (4) receive further reports on the outcome of the above programme of work.

As an amendment Councillor Meiklejohn, seconded by Councillor Jackson, moved, in substitution, that Council agrees:-

- (1) to note the content of the report, and agree to put on hold any further work in relation to the new HQ building until the consultation exercise has been completed and members have received the outcome of that process;
- (2) to extend the lease of Abbotsford House for a period of 12 months. With the option of 3 monthly extensions thereafter on the basis of an annual rental of £200,000;
- (3) to put on hold any further work in relation to the relocation of the Town Hall facility until the consultation exercise has been completed and members have received the outcome of that process; and
- (4) that a further report to be brought to Council following the conclusion of the consultation process in order to inform the next steps.

Following discussion, Council adjourned at 11.00 a.m. to allow members to consider the terms of the motion and amendment, and reconvened at 11.30 a.m. with all members present as per the sederunt.

Councillor Spears gave notice of a further amendment.

Following further discussion, Councillor C Martin, with the consent of the Provost, and Baillie Paterson as his seconder, adjusted the terms of his motion to insert an additional clause (2) with the subsequent clauses renumbered accordingly:-

- (2) that no further new contractual work will be entered into in relation to the new HQ building until the consultation exercise has been completed and members have received the outcome of that process.

On a division, 16 members voted for the motion and 14 voted for the amendment with voting as follows:-

For the motion (16) – Provost Reid; Depute Provost Patrick; Baillie Paterson; Councillors Black, Blackwood, D Goldie, G Goldie, Gow, MacDonald, McLuckie, Mahoney, C Martin, Dr C R Martin, Murray, Nicol and Nimmo.

For the amendment (14) – Councillors Alexander, Balfour, Bird, Carleschi, Chalmers, Coleman, Hughes, Jackson, McCabe, Meiklejohn, Oliver, Ritchie, Spears and Turner.
The motion was carried.

Councillor Spears, seconded by Councillor McCabe then moved, as a further amendment, the terms of the motion, with clause (4) substituted by the following:-

- (4) to initiate an options appraisal for the replacement of the Town Hall/arts facility and to receive a report back at the meeting on 7 October 2015.

Council then adjourned for lunch at 1.30 p.m. and reconvened at 2.15 p.m. with all members present as per the sederunt.

Following discussion, Councillor C Martin, with the consent of the Provost, and Baillie Paterson, as his seconder, agreed to adjust the terms of the motion to incorporate the terms of the further amendment in addition to the clause (4) wording in the motion.

Decision

Council agreed:-

- (1) to note progress with Stage 1 design of the HQ project, the associated workstreams and the consultation, as agreed by Members at the meeting of full Council on 8 October 2014, currently taking place;
- (2) that no further new contractual work will be entered into in relation to the new HQ building until the consultation exercise has been completed and members have received the outcome of that process;
- (3) to extend the existing lease of Abbotsford House for a period of 12 months, with the option of 3 monthly extensions thereafter on the basis of an annual rental of £200,000;
- (4) to initiate an options appraisal for the replacement of the Town Hall/arts facility and to participate in the business case and option appraisal exercise taking place involving Forth Valley College and Falkirk Community Trust in order to consider the optimum approach to provision of a replacement Town Hall/arts facility and to receive a report back at the meeting on 7 October 2015, and
- (5) to receive further reports on the outcome of the programme of work detailed within the report.