



## **Agenda Item 10**

**Refurbishment of Arnotdale House,  
Dollar Park, Falkirk**

**Title:** Refurbishment of Arnotdale House, Dollar Park, Falkirk  
**Meeting:** Executive  
**Date:** 13th June 2017  
**Submitted By:** Director of Development Services

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 This report advises Executive of a successful funding bid to the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) for the refurbishment of Arnotdale House and the proposed letting of the property to Cyrenians.

**2. Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Executive agrees:

a) to the refurbishment of Arnotdale House using the Regeneration Capital Grant Fund award of £1.125m and £450k from the Council's capital programme to accommodate a community facility led by Cyrenians.

**3. Background**

- 3.1 Arnotdale House is a Common Good Property and a grade B listed building, prominently situated within Dollar Park, see Appendix 1 for site plan. The property has been vacant for some time and has been marketed on two occasions. The external fabric of the property was refurbished in 2014 and further capital funds of £450k had been allocated by the Council for a Phase 2 refurbishment. The Council had planned to carry out these phase 2 works in 2016/17 following receipt of a proposal from Cyrenians. The works were put on hold in order to use the Council funds as leverage for external funding
- 3.2 Cyrenians is a well-established registered charity with 50 years experience across Scotland that supports people excluded from family, home, work or the community. Cyrenians currently work with the Council's Criminal Justice services and have successfully restored the Walled Garden in Dollar Park. They currently manage this garden on behalf of the Council.

#### **4. Considerations**

- 4.1 Cyrenians propose to take a lease of Arnotdale House and transform it back into a centrepiece of the community, creating a café, events/meeting space and office accommodation, to generate income to provide sustainable activities while also delivering work experience and volunteering opportunities. The building would also provide expanded office space for the employability work and peer mentoring offered by Cyrenians for those that have been involved with the criminal justice system.
- 4.2 The renovation and refurbishment will provide members of the community with an appealing destination with the facilities required to make the most of their visit to Dollar Park. A café will provide the only place for refreshments within the park, and surrounding area. This will include toilets and baby changing facilities for those using the cafe and other parts of the park. The events/meeting space will be available for events, conferences and even weddings and funeral teas. Arnotdale will provide the accommodation required by Cyrenians to provide an enhanced and expanded range of training and employment opportunities
- 4.3 Working jointly with the Cyrenians, and utilising the allocated Council funds as leverage, a joint bid was submitted to Heritage Lottery Fund, however this application was unsuccessful. The Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund (RCGF) was identified as an alternative source of funding. This fund aims to support regeneration projects which offer benefits for community groups and excluded client groups. The Council submitted a bid to the RCGF for £1.125m which was successful. The project must be undertaken in 2017/18 with the grant fund committed before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. The entire project has a budget cost of £1.575m and will be managed by the Council's Design Services
- 4.4 The key outputs of the refurbishment project and subsequent lease to Cyrenians are as follows:
- reconnect the community with Arnotdale House, the walled garden and Dollar Park, ensuring Dollar Park is seen as a central focal point for the local community
  - provide work experience and job opportunities for people from deprived communities and vulnerable groups
  - Individuals on community payback or supervision orders will have access to learning new skills and development opportunities to help them back to work
  - 4 new FTE jobs will be created
  - address worklessness through sustainable employability programme. 4 paid community Job Scotland placements benefitting 8 people each year and 50 volunteering and work experience opportunities will also be offered

- people will have access to quality public space and greenspace through the restoration of Arnotdale House and the adjacent walled garden
- provision of interpretation materials on the history of Dollar Park and Robert Dollar, who donated the park and Arnotdale House to the town.

Heads of terms for a lease to Cyrenians have been established.

## **5. Consultation**

Regular meetings of the Dollar Park Working Group have taken place involving local members, the Friends of Dollar Park and Falkirk Community Trust. All are aware, and in favour of, the proposal to invest in the property in this way. Local members have also been advised of this report

## **6. Implications**

### **Financial**

- 6.1 The RCGF award provides £1.125m of funds towards delivery of this project. A sum of £450k was previously allocated from the Council's capital programme for phase 2 of the Arnotdale House refurbishment and requires to be spent on this project. The rental income arising from the lease to Cyrenians of £8,000 annually will be paid to the Common Good fund.

### **Legal**

- 6.2 A 10 year lease will be established with Cyrenians for their occupation of the Arnotdale property following the refurbishment. It is considered that the community facing purposes of the proposed lease do not create any Common Good implications.

### **Resource**

- 6.3 No additional resources are required

### **Risk**

- 6.4 The RGCF grant offer is conditional on the funds being spent as detailed in the bid application and being committed this financial year. Failure to do so may result in Scottish Government seeking the return of an element of the grant monies. The contract will require to be tightly managed to ensure all the conditions are met

## **Equalities**

- 6.5 The refurbishment project will enable a range of services and activities to proceed that are of benefit to excluded groups.

## **Sustainability & Environmental Implications**

- 6.6 The refurbishment project aids the sustainability and conservation of an important Common Good asset in Dollar Park.

## **7 Conclusion**

- 7.1 The successful bid to the RCGF along with the allocated funds from the Council's capital programme will allow for a significant investment to be made into an important local building that will see it brought back into use for the benefit of the local community. The lease to the Cyrenians will allow them to have full operational and maintenance responsibility for the facility, it will also generate rental income for the Common Good fund.

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Director of Development Services

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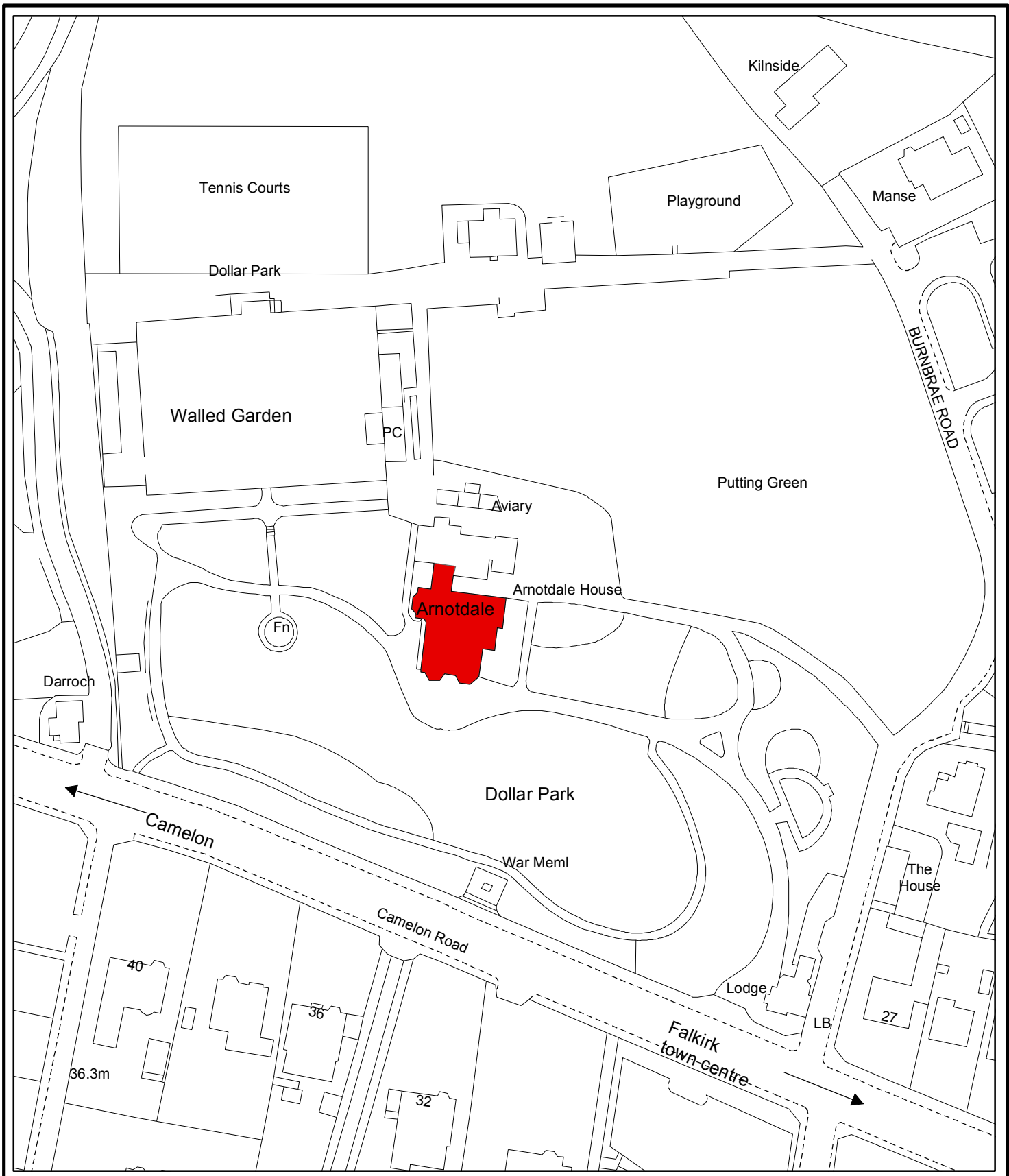
## **Appendices**

- **Appendix 1 – Site Plan**

### **List of Background Papers:**

**The following papers were relied on in the preparation of this report in terms of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973:**

- **RCGF Application**
- **RCGF grant award**



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Subject

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