



To: Planning & Property Board

On: 15 March 2016

Report by: Director of Development and Housing Services

Heading: Paisley Library Relocation

1. Summary

- 1.1. The regeneration of Paisley Town Centre is a key priority for the Council. The Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy (PTCHAS) sets out a vision for a cultural and heritage-led regeneration of the town centre which includes the redevelopment of Paisley Museum and Library to create a signature visitor attraction of national importance for the town.
 - 1.2. The options appraisal carried out for the new museum (and submitted to HLF in December 2015) demonstrates the need to relocate the lending library element of the current offer to an alternative site to allow for the new museum to be developed.
 - 1.3. This report examines the options available from a property perspective and recommends a preferred relocation option for the library to members for their consideration.
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2. Recommendations

It is recommended that;

- 2.1 the Board approves the Council to enter into negotiations to purchase the property at 22/22a High Street, Paisley as the preferred site for a new lending library for central Paisley, subject to the property (following detailed survey) being able to provide an appropriate library facility for Paisley
- 2.2 the Board authorises the Director of Finance and Resources to conclude negotiations subject to the terms and conditions contained within this report

and any other terms and conditions considered necessary by the Head of Property Services and the Head of Corporate Governance to protect the interests of the Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 The regeneration of Paisley Town Centre is a key priority for the Council as highlighted in the Paisley Town Centre Heritage Asset Strategy.
- 3.2 The Outline Business Case (OBC) for Paisley's new museum was approved by the Economy & Jobs Policy Board in November 2015 and proposes a significant redevelopment of the existing museum. The overall aim of the project is to deliver large scale economic regeneration benefits for the town. The economic impact analysis estimates that the project will draw an increase in annual visitor numbers to 150,000 visits per annum and contribute 238 jobs to the local economy both through increased visitor numbers and by targeting opportunities for local people and suppliers in all parts of the project.
- 3.3 The November 2015 decision noted the opportunity to deliver an enhanced lending library service for Paisley as a result of the museum redevelopment and further regeneration benefits for the town centre through the consideration of options for an alternative location in the heart of the town centre. The Board also agreed to conduct a consultation exercise with service users and wider interests on this opportunity, the results of which were reported to the Council's Leadership Board in February 2016. A summary of the key findings from that exercise are outlined below. Overall the results indicate a positive or neutral response to the planned changes, with double the number of respondents viewing the relocation as a good or very good idea, compared to those that viewed it as a bad or very bad idea:
- Of users, 85% said they were very or quite likely to visit the library in its new location, with 12% unsure;
 - Only 4% said they were quite or very unlikely to visit;
 - Of lapsed and non-users, 47% said they would be very or quite likely to visit the library in its new location, with 37% quite or very unlikely and 16% unsure;
 - Of users, 43% think the relocation is a very good or quite a good idea;
 - Of lapsed and non-users, 54% think the relocation is a very good or quite a good idea;
- 3.4 The main reasons for a positive reaction were:
- More accessible / better access
 - Convenient location / good location
 - Perception more people will use it
- 3.5 The only previous context to seeking alternative premises for a Paisley Central Library was some initial work carried out by officers a number of years

ago examining the potential of the Town Hall as a possible alternative location. This did not progress as far as being reported to a Council Board.

4. Preferred Location

4.1. Given the preference of service users that any relocation should be within Paisley Town Centre officers have developed a series of criteria against which to assess the potential locations for relocating a new library to. These are set out below:

- Ability to contribute significantly to the ongoing regeneration of Paisley Town Centre, and in particular the High Street;
- Stimulation of private sector investment;
- Accessible to public transport;
- Close to the centre of the town;
- High profile and easily recognisable as Paisley's Central Library;
- The ability to direct footfall to where it is needed most in terms of future private investment decisions for vacant property;
- Property available to purchase or on long lease basis to justify Council investment in new long term public facility;
- Ability to develop a new library in the timescales required to meet the programme for redevelopment of Paisley Museum (i.e. by late 2017)
- Ability to offer a minimum of (circa) 600 sq metres floorspace to meet Renfrewshire Leisure space requirements;

4.2. Officers took the approach to assess all currently vacant (Feb 2016) premises in the Town Centre within easy reach of the town's High Street. A long list of nine potential sites was developed and these were then assessed against a range of criteria and ranked from 1 to 9.

4.3. The premises that has been ranked first amongst all of the options considered is a property at **22/22a High Street**, Paisley. These two neighbouring units were previously operated as a single entity by the Abbey National Building Society. Following the relocation of the building society to 13 High Street in 2008 (when Santander took over the society and rebranded) the property was split into two units. One side was operated by the Internacional clothes store until 2012 and the adjoining unit has been vacant aside from temporary short term lettings.

4.4. The property lies right in the centre of the pedestrianised section of Paisley High Street, opposite the entrance to the Paisley Centre. It is very high profile in Paisley terms and offers a very distinctive double-height frontage that makes it unusual in the context of the neighbouring properties. The building is not currently listed. Officers are of the view that the location offers the potential to make a very significant contribution to the regeneration of the High Street and the improving image of the Town Centre as a place to invest.

- 4.5. The property is in excess of 650 sq metres over the first four floors. The upper floors could be used for associated staff offices or “non-public” functions subject to further survey work and internal layout options. It also has a basement area which could be utilised for storage if appropriate and suitable following the more detailed surveys.
 - 4.6. A public lift would be introduced to allow for disabled access to all public floors of the building.
 - 4.7. Access for servicing would be from the High Street, but in that respect is no different to many other properties in the same situation. Public access and egress and emergency exit would be from the High Street only.
 - 4.8. Internally the property is in a poor condition but shares this characteristic with many of the other vacant properties assessed. The purchase price reflect current property valuations for premises in this condition in Paisley High Street. The costs of the acquisition of the property and its refurbishment for a lending library are to be funded from the resources specifically approved for this project.
 - 4.9. It should be noted that the property has been the subject of an initial survey by AECOM on behalf of the Council in late 2015 when the Council entered into preliminary discussions with the owner. The consultant’s report has flagged up a number of unresolved issues which will require more detailed intrusive surveys of different parts of the building. These detailed surveys will allow the Council to establish more precisely the costs of refurbishment and redevelopment for library purposes.
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5. Property Terms

- 5.1. The combined property offers approximately 650 sq metres over 5 floors – basement, ground, first, second and third. Not all floors would necessarily be available for public use but this will be subject to further analysis and in particular the ability to offer lift access from the ground floor to all floors. All floors of the properties are reached from the High Street entrance. Fire exits are also likely to be via the High Street due to the configuration of properties immediately north of the site at School Wynd.
- 5.2. The commercial terms on which the property is being offered to Renfrewshire Council is as follows:
 - Purchase on basis of vacant possession and ownership transferring to Renfrewshire Council;
 - Sale price of £250,000 (excl VAT). VAT will be charged but then reclaimed by Renfrewshire Council;

- Business Rates attributable of £39,300; however with Renfrewshire Leisure as tenant and a registered charity would not be liable for business rates;
 - Insurance – the property would have to be added to the Council's insurance policies;
- 5.3. An application for planning permission will be submitted by the Council to allow for proposed library uses and allow flexibility for cafe or other potential uses of the premises (previously class 1 retail and class 2 financial services).
- 5.4. A detailed assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the building can be refurbished or redeveloped for the proposed use and monitored closely by a dedicated Project Manager from the Council's Property Services Team to remain within the agreed Paisley Town Centre regeneration budget.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – the financial implications to the Council are principally the purchase price for the property at 22/22a High Street, the development costs as well as the fit-out costs for the library facility and associated uses. These will be funded from the resources specifically approved for the Library relocation project.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – the facility will be staffed by existing employees of Renfrewshire Leisure (or partner organisations or franchisee should associated uses, eg. cafe, be considered suitable) and the property managed and maintained by the Council's Facilities Management Team during the term of the Council's ownership.
3. **Community Planning –**
Children and Young People – the new Lending Library for central Paisley will offer enhanced opportunities for community participation in learning;
Empowering our Communities – the Library will allow for capacity building in cultural and other activities;
Jobs and the Economy – the new Library will bring attention to the momentum gathering within Paisley and Renfrewshire which will boost confidence in the area as a place for further investment, particularly in the High Street;
Safer and Stronger – by reducing vacancy and encouraging footfall in the heart of the Town Centre the Library can foster a greater sense of safety for Town Centre users and encourage further investment in other vacant property;
4. **Legal** – the Council's negotiations to purchase the premises in question is being undertaken with guidance from senior property and financial offers and the Head of Corporate Governance. There are not considered to be any significant legal issues..

5. **Property/Assets** – the implications of the Council's ownership of the property is covered in the body of the report.
 6. **Information Technology** - The premises will be assessed in terms of specific IT requirements to meet the needs of proposed Library users and employees.
 7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report
 8. **Health & Safety** – No implications identified
 9. **Procurement-** Any contractual requirements for the refurbishment of the premises at 22 / 22a High Street will be dealt with by the Head of Property Services under the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
 10. **Risk** – No significant implications identified
 11. **Privacy Impact** - No implications identified
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List of Background Papers

Leadership Board; 17 February 2016; Paisley Central Library Consultation Report

Economy & Jobs Policy Board; 18 November 2015; The Regeneration of Paisley Town Centre – Paisley Museum

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