

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

CABINET – 20 FEBRUARY 2008

GALSTON LOCAL OFFICE AND SOCIAL WORK OFFICES

Report by the Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1** To advise the Cabinet of the options considered for the Galston Local Office and Social Work Offices presently located at 11 Cross Street, Galston and to seek approval of Option 4, the refurbishment of the existing building to accommodate the Galston Local Office and Social Work Offices.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** It was identified that the Local Office and Social Work Office in Galston were not compliant with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and the building was in a fairly poor condition including some structural cracking. Technical Services were asked to investigate options for addressing these issues.
- 2.2** Various options were considered including an extension to Galston Library, a new building on the library site incorporating the Library, Local Office and Social Work Offices and refurbishment of the existing building to accommodate the Local Office and Social Work Offices.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 3.1 Option 1** - An extension to the library to accommodate the Local Office. Estimated cost = £300,000.

Construct an extension to Galston Library to accommodate the Local Office and a meeting room that could be used by Social Work for their clients.

Advantages DDA problems encountered with access to local office solved. It should be possible to keep the library operational during construction.	Disadvantages Council would still have two buildings to operate and maintain. The existing building in centre of Galston would only be partly utilised for Social Work Offices and there would still be DDA issues and issues with condition of this building.
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3.2 Option 2 - An extension to the existing library, accommodating both the Local Office and Social Work Offices. Estimated cost = £2,200,000.

The limited size of the site results in most of the site being built on. Because the building is so close to boundaries, rooflights would be required to replace windows.

<p>Advantages DDA problems encountered with access to Local Office and Social Work Offices would be resolved. Council would have only one building to maintain. New roof to library would reduce future maintenance.</p>	<p>Disadvantages The existing building in the centre of Galston would be left unoccupied with limited opportunity to let or sell the building in its existing condition. The Library would require to be relocated during construction works. The Planning Service has indicated that the size of the extension to the Library to accommodate the Local Office and Social Work Offices could be deemed to be over-development of the site. There are cost penalties in working around an existing building on a confined site. Car parking requirements would also be an issue and negotiations with the adjoining social club for joint use of their car park would require to be undertaken</p>
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3.3 Option 3 - A new two storey building incorporating Library, Local Office and Social Work Offices on site of existing Library. Estimated Cost = £2,600,000

Because of concerns as to the viability of Option 2 and in particular it may constitute overdevelopment of the site, Option 3 was developed as an alternative. Demolition of the existing Library and constructing a new two storey building with the Library and Local Office on the ground floor and the Social Work Offices on the first floor.

<p>Advantages DDA problems encountered with access to Local Office and Social Work Offices would be resolved. A new facility would remove existing maintenance issues. A number of Council services would be in one new purpose built building.</p>	<p>Disadvantages The library would require to be relocated during construction works. Car parking requirements would be an issue and negotiations with the adjoining social club for joint use of their car park would require to be undertaken. The existing building in the centre of Galston would be unoccupied with limited opportunity to let or sell the building in its existing condition.</p>
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3.4 Option 4 – Refurbishment of existing building to accommodate Local Office and Social Work Offices. Estimated cost = £1,600,000

Refurbish existing building and install DDA compliant lift to both Local Office level and to Social Work Offices. Upgrade fabric of building internally and externally to allow for prolonged lifespan. An allowance has been made for structural repairs. The intrusive structural survey and geotechnical survey have not highlighted any issues that cannot be contained within the existing budget.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Retains existing building in the centre of Galston. DDA problems encountered with access to Local Office and Social Work Offices now resolved. Work will address all maintenance issues with existing building and the existing library	Unable to provide disabled access from parking area at rear of building. Social Work and Local Office staff will require to be relocated during refurbishment works. This option retains two buildings to operate and maintain. This option does not co-locate Library and Local Office in one building.

4. STUDY OF GALSTON TOWN CENTRE BY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND REGENERATION

4.1 Cognisance also needs to be taken of a study commissioned by Development, Planning and Regeneration for Galston Town Centre. The main objective of the study is to explore potential projects/schemes that could be carried out to improve the current condition of the town centre.

4.2 One of the specific sites that consultants have been asked to assess options for is 7–11 Cross Street. The consultants have been made aware that the Council is likely to continue to use 11 Cross Street. However they have been asked to look at how the site could be improved in terms of making better use of the rear car park and enhancing the current co-op building.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The allocation of £1.600m is included in the current Capital Plan for this project. Option 4 can be accommodated within this budget at current prices.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 It is recommended that members

- (i) Approve Option 4, the refurbishment of the existing building to accommodate the Galston Local Office and Social Work Offices as the preferred option for the above project.

Alex McPhee
Executive Head of Finance and Asset Management
13 February 2008

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

NIL

For further information please contact
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