

ANGUS COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 OCTOBER 2002

BRECHIN TOWN HOUSE – CITY OF BRECHIN PARTNERSHIP

REPORT BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE, DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES AND  
DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY SERVICES

**ABSTRACT**

This report seeks approval for the development of the old Brechin Town House as a museum as part of the Brechin Town Centre regeneration initiative with the necessary funding to be made available from a combination of the Council's revenue budget and the City of Brechin Common Good fund.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee agrees to:-

- a) the development of Brechin Town House phase 2 as proposed in this report
- b) meet the capital costs of phase 2 as detailed from the City of Brechin Common Good fund
- c) meet the ongoing revenue costs as detailed from the Council's revenue budget
- d) the relocation of Brechin Museum to the Town House
- e) note the establishment of a 'Friends of The Old Town House'
- f) instruct the Cultural Services Manager to discuss with the Friends of The Old Town House possible external funding for the future development of the Town House
- g) instruct officers of the Council to make application to HLF for funding to support the preparation of a consultant's report on the regeneration of Brechin Town Centre.
- h) note that a report on possible future developments – externally funded - of the remainder of the Town House will be brought to the committee for consideration in due course.

**2. BACKGROUND**

The redevelopment of Brechin Town House has been the subject of considerable public debate over the past three years.

The Policy and Resources Committee considered report 1218/01 in October 2001 and agreed to the development of a City of Brechin Partnership based on the revitalisation of the city centre and instructed officers to draft a consultant's brief for this work. Report 577/02 to the Policy and Resources Committee in May of this year provided an update on the development of the City of Brechin Partnership, which had arisen from the local community planning process.

A Town House sub-group was established by the Partnership and concluded that the establishment of a museum in the building was the preferred use. The development of the Town House is included in proposals within the draft consultant's brief prepared for the City of Brechin Partnership. The brief also includes the investigation into the potential for a major development of a range of linked buildings in Brechin City Centre in the vicinity of the Town House. Any such development will take some time to come to fruition, but, in the meantime, we must make the best use possible of the Town House to the benefit of the town. The Town House is seen as pivotal to the redevelopment of the town centre.

Angus Council, as a member of the City of Brechin Partnership, has undertaken basic works on the frontage of the building in order to enable window displays to be mounted, and initial illustrated displays of the Brechin Heritage Trail and the history of the Town House were launched in September. The provision of this limited facility was a first phase in the process which was seen as quick to achieve and a pro-active gesture of the Council to support the work of the Partnership.

### **Proposals**

For the second phase, it is proposed that the ground floor room, formerly a shop, in Brechin Town House be converted into the town museum. Basic work will require to be undertaken before it could be opened to the public, and museum displays would also require to be mounted.

The present museum displays in Brechin Library, though small, would be adequate for this space and it is proposed that the museum be relocated, with the display cases and panels being moved, along with the core displays featuring Brechin's history. Some of the displays will require refreshment, and there will be a small capacity for changing displays. While this is a cost effective solution, it is also an essential prerequisite to securing funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund for future development as the existing museum registration would transfer with the museum facility.

The Council is the custodian of the Town House, which is vested in the City of Brechin Common Good fund, and also owns the town's museum based in the library. As a demonstration of the Council's commitment to the City of Brechin Partnership and its aims, it is proposed that Angus Council manage the facility with a post being established in the Leisure Services department (Cultural Services division).

### **Building Work**

The first phase works included decoration to the shop front, and re-glazing the windows to comply with current health and safety regulations.

The second phase would require more extensive works and include a new heating system, a lighting track, uv filters on the windows, signage, disabled toilet, small kitchen, improvements to the toilet, floor coverings, decoration, security and fire alarms. They exclude other fabric repairs to the rear part of the building on the ground floor. The present proposals do not include the upper floor. Planning approvals will be required for change of use and the NID process will be put in hand shortly.

### **Future Development**

Part of the upper floor could be opened as a gallery/meeting room similar to the Meffan in Forfar. Access from the ground floor to the internal stair and a lift would be required. Existing partitions would be removed and the main room and gallery would be restored. There is widespread community support for the remainder of the building housing museum displays featuring the court and jail roles played by the building in the past.

Such a development would require to be externally funded and it is proposed that this be pursued in consultation with the Friends of The Old Town House, a group which has recently been set up. It is envisaged that the Friends of The Old Town House will act in an advisory capacity and raise funds for future development.

Future developments will be subject to further reports to the Committee.

### **Consultant's Brief**

It has been acknowledged that the City of Brechin Partnership should finalise its strategy for the town centre and to assist in this process there is agreement to have a consultancy exercise carried out which would establish outcomes along the lines of:

- An analysis of the architectural, cultural and historical significance of the central area.
- Identifying and analysing national and local government policy for the development of the area with discussion with the local planning authority, as a basis for developing physical projects.
- Surveying the structure, condition and capacity of the properties adjoining the Town House within the delineated area.

- Identifying options for collective re-use of these properties, including an assessment of the feasibility of each option based on their market potential and therefore their potential impact on the economy of the town centre.
- Providing budget costings for the implementation of each of the options identifying both capital and revenue implications for each.
- Holding a partnership workshop to discuss these initial feasibility findings and to agree the preferred option for the redevelopment of the premises adjoining the Town House.
- Participating in a public meeting to discuss the options and determine support levels for each.
- Preparing plans, timetable and costed proposals for the preferred development option.
- Providing a detailed assessment of market share potential for the proposal, utilising desk research methods.
- Identifying options and preferred mechanisms for operation of the facility e.g. private company public facility or charity.
- Identifying funding sources.
- Reporting these detailed findings to the partnership and to the major funding partners.
- Preparing and submitting external funding applications.
- Submitting planning & building warrant applications as required.
- Preparing tender documentation and seeking tenders in accordance with public sector partner requirements.
- Overseeing contract (including the planning supervisor role) up to and including the contractor's liability period.

It is proposed to lodge an application to HLF to meet the cost of this consultancy. In the event that this HLF application fails a further report outlining alternative funding options will be submitted.

It is also proposed that a finalised brief be submitted to an early meeting of the Council for approval after consultation with the chairman of the City of Brechin Partnership.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The estimated development and running costs of phase 2 are shown in Appendix 1. There is no provision within service departments' budgets for this expenditure.

#### **Capital Costs and Funding**

Given that the Town House is a Common Good Fund asset and that this project will be of benefit to the wider community it is proposed that the building and display costs of the phase 2 works, totalling £33,200 be funded by the City of Brechin Common Good Fund. Although there is no provision for the proposed expenditure within the City of Brechin Common Good Fund budget estimates for 2002/03 the balance on the Fund is sufficient to meet these costs.

#### **Revenue Costs and Funding**

The annual running costs associated with the phase 2 upgrade proposals amount to £22,300 in a full financial year at current prices. The part year running costs for 2002/03 will depend on how quickly the upgrade works can be completed but are unlikely to exceed £3,500 (assuming a start date of 1 February 2002). Any part year costs in 2002/03 will be met from the Corporate Initiatives element of the Miscellaneous Other Services Revenue Budget. The funding arrangements for future years will be considered as part of the 2003/04 budget setting process.

Future phases including the development of the upper floor will be considered as part of the wider city regeneration proposals and require a separate funding strategy. It is expected this would be through external funding measures including support from the Heritage Lottery Fund and funds raised through the Friends of The Old Town House group.

#### 4. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no human rights implications associated with this report.

#### 5. CONSULTATION

The Director of Law and Administration and the Director of Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

The development of Brechin Town House by Angus Council, as proposed in this report, is a major contribution to the work of the City of Brechin Partnership and a catalyst to the regeneration of Brechin City Centre.

#### REFERENCES

<u>Committee</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Report No</u>	<u>Subject</u>
Policy and Resources Committee	23.10.01	1218/01	Brechin City Centre – Community Planning
Policy and Resources Committee	14.5.02	577/02	City of Brechin Partnership – Community Planning

**A B WATSON**  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

**JOHN R ZIMNY**  
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

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#### BACKGROUND PAPERS

**NOTE:** No background papers, as defined by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information), were relied on to any material extent in preparing this report.

**BRECHIN TOWN HOUSE**  
**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

**UPGRADING WORKS Phase 1**

Painting exterior and re-glazing (funded from City of Brechin Common Good Fund)	£1,900	complete 07/02
Display boards - provisional sum (funded from Leisure Services 2002/03 budget)	£764	complete 09/02
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£2,664</b>	

**PROPOSED UPGRADING WORKS Phase 2**

Item	Provisional Sum
Signage	£600
Flooring and floor coverings	£2,000
Toilet improvements	£500
Window blinds	£600
Security alarm	£500
Gas central heating	£5,000
Kitchen	£500
Disabled toilet	£10,000
IT and telephones	£3,000
Furniture etc.	£1,000
Fire alarm and CCTV	£1,500
Displays, hanging rails, display lighting	£8,000
<b>TOTAL (to be funded from City of Brechin Common Good Fund)</b>	<b>£33,200</b>

**ANNUAL RUNNING COSTS**

Rates including water	£2,300
Rental to Brechin Common Good Fund	£2,000
Gas, electricity	£700
Staff costs	£17,000
General office expenses	£50
Telephone	£250
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£22,300</b> *

\* Any part year costs in 2002/03 will be met from the Corporate Initiatives Budget. The funding for future years will be considered as part of the 2003/04 budget setting process