

ANGUS COUNCIL

STRATEGIC POLICY COMMITTEE – 3 DECEMBER 2013

HOSPITALFIELD HOUSE ARBROATH

REPORT BY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

ABSTRACT

This report advises members of proposals being developed by the trustees of Hospitalfield House and requests approval for a formal dialogue with the Trust Director and Board in relation to the nature and extent of council support to the proposed scheme.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) note the development proposals being promoted by the Trustees of Hospitalfield and the potential benefits to Angus of the various initiatives included;
- (ii) authorises the Chief Executive to enter into formal dialogue with the Trust Director and Board to establish the scope and nature and extent of council support to the scheme;
- (iii) agree that the potential long term loan of works of art in the council's ownership (including the two works by Peter Brueghel currently on display in Arbroath library) for public display in any new exhibition space should be progressed within this dialogue;
- (iv) request that further reports are presented to the committee to update members on the progress of the Trust's scheme and proposal for council support.

2. BACKGROUND

The will of Patrick Allan-Fraser of Arbroath left his estate in Scotland in a trust, based at Hospitalfield Arbroath, to provide young people with training in the main forms of art. This provision in his will came into effect after his death in 1890. Over time the provisions in the will have been reinterpreted around similar values and, since the early 20th century Hospitalfield has hosted and facilitated artists, students, educators, writers and others working within the broad themes of contemporary art, design and cultural ideas. The house itself is an architectural gem and has listed building status.

The 'Future Plan' for Hospitalfield being developed by the current Board of Trustees is to create a revitalised, public-facing cultural destination for the 21st century – committed to supporting the research and production of contemporary visual art and inspiring a range of associated creative activity. It is intended that this development will raise the profile of Hospitalfield locally, nationally and internationally.

With a clear commitment to partnership being voiced by the Hospitalfield Director and trustees Angus Council is being seen as a vital partner in making the very most of the Trust's assets. With the new V&A to the south and with the development of the city Art Gallery in Aberdeen this scheme offers great potential for a cultural route along the east coast.

The Trust's Future Plan involves the renewal and renovation of the historic buildings and thoughtful architectural additions to enable the organisation to meet its aim to -

- provide a dynamic research and production environment for artists and arts professionals
- become a public-facing, cultural resource for a broad range of audiences locally, regionally and across Scotland

- ensure that learning is central to, and effective within, all programming strands including engagement with local schools and colleges
- prioritise local activities and opportunities equally for the development of international partnerships and networks
- ensure that Hospitalfield has an economically sustainable future achieved through strong partnerships, collaborations and a clear strategy for earned income.

Clearly a range of approval processes will apply to the implementation of the scheme including listed building consents and planning considerations. This report does not intend to circumvent or pre-empt those processes but rather to focus on the potential benefit to the council and to Angus more generally of supporting the development of these proposals. The proposed scheme features -

- refurbishment of the existing residential accommodation and studios and the development of new facilities to establish a world-class research, professional development and production environment for the visual arts, for design and for other close disciplines.
- the development of a new building on an old footprint as a Centre for Collection Development including a new and inviting front entrance. Included will be; a collection store, archive, study and print store and an exhibition/project space. These museum-standard rooms will be the 'first port of call' for visitors, central to the experience of engaging with Hospitalfield.
- sustainability through the development of new residential facilities and the universal attraction to local people and visitors from further afield of the fernery, gardens and a new cafe.
- a commitment to design excellence being demonstrated already by the Trust's engagement with the globally recognised Caruso St John architectural practice in the development of the concept to date.

3. TIMESCALES

Key dates in the development of the Future Plan for Hospitalfield are as follows -

- August 2013 – reach RIBA stage B feasibility for Hospitalfield's Future Plan - achieved.
- August 2013 – submission of 1st stage Creative Scotland capital funding application – completed.
- December 2013 - submission of Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) application – in progress.
- End December 2013 – decision on acceptance in to the 2nd stage of the Creative Scotland capital process expected.
- March 2014 – decision on acceptance into the 2nd stage of the HLF capital process expected.
- Late 2014 – (depending on the decisions above) submission of 2nd stage funding applications to creative Scotland and HLF.
- Mid to late 2014 - launch the 'private' fundraising campaign by the Trust.
- September 2015 – appointment of contractor(s).
- October – November 2015 – finalise building programme over an 18 month building period.
- October – December 2015 – vacate Hospitalfield – move all collections into safe storage
- January 2016 – start on site.
- July 2017 – project completion.
- July - November 2017 move collections back in to Hospitalfield.
- December 2017 – opening of "new" Hospitalfield.

4. COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT AND SUPPORT

There a number of aspects of the proposed development that are supportive of the council's agenda. These include the enhancement of opportunity of local residents, the provision of new opportunities for learners, the improving the attraction of Angus to visitors and tourists and the creation of local employment opportunities. It is suggested that these benefits confirm the need for the council to consider the ways in which it can support the delivery of the Future Plan being developed by the Trust.

To date officer engagement with the Trust's proposals has included discussion with education staff in relation to collaborative work between the Trust and local schools, engagement with specialist planning and conservation officers in respect of building related matters, discussions with the Chief Executive with regard to the scheme overall, including economic development related aspects of the proposals, and the provision of a high level briefing for ward members.

To take council engagement forward it is proposed that a formal dialogue is initiated to be coordinated by the Chief Executive to give consideration to the following matters in detail.

- the potential for new facilities to enhance the delivery of the arts related curriculum in Angus schools and the opportunities available to Angus learners in general;
- the means by which the economic impact of the scheme can be maximised including contributions to the status of Arbroath as a visitor destination within the overall Angus tourism strategy;
- the means by which the council might assist the delivery of the scheme through the involvement in project management and governance of a senior officer or elected member at project board level to contribute advice and experience, connecting the scheme with the council's strategies and objectives;
- the potential for the council to work in partnership with the Trust in relation to the conservation and public display of works of art and other artefacts in the Council's ownership including the two works by Peiter Brueghel currently on display in Arbroath library to maximise public visibility of these works.

It is proposed that this dialogue should be pursued with immediate effect with update reports being brought to the committee as and when required.

5. RISKS

Risks to Angus Council are minimal. The scheme is being promoted and developed by the Hospitalfield Trust. No funding is being requested from the Council.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No funding is being requested from Angus Council. The Trust's current cost report indicates that the overall cost of the project is likely to be £9.9m. This will be funded by the Trust from a range of sources.

- Creative Scotland capital funding £2m
- Heritage Lottery Fund £4.8m
- Trust public fund raising £3.1m

7. HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

There are no Human Rights issues arising from this report.

8. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no Equalities issues arising from this report.

9. ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN AND SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT

This report contributes to the following local outcome(s) contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Our children and young people are confident individuals, effective contributors, successful learners and responsible citizens
- Adults maximise their potential through learning opportunities
- Angus is a good place to live in, work in and visit
- We have a sustainable economy with good employment opportunities
- Our natural and built environment is protected and enjoyed

10. CONSULTATION

The Strategic Directors for Communities and People, the Head of Corporate Improvement & Finance and the Head of Legal & Democratic Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

11. CONCLUSION

The development of Hospitalfield along the lines proposed by the Trust has the potential to make a significant contribution to supporting the delivery the council's aspirations for the county and its residents. In this context members requested to support the recommendations made in this report.

**RICHARD STIFF
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

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