

Title of Report:	Ballycastle Museum Update & Health & Safety Works
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure & Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	18th May 2021
For Decision or For Information	For Decision

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Resilient, Healthy and Engaged Communities
Outcome	Council will work to develop and promote stable and cohesive communities across the Borough
Lead Officer	Head of Community & Culture Museum Development Manager

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES/
Capital/Revenue	
Code	
Staffing Costs	

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date: Aug 2016 (CAH strategy)
	EQIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	Yes/No	Date: 2019
	RNA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date: n/a
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	Yes/No	Date:
	DPIA Required and Completed:	Yes/No	Date:

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the agreed actions for Ballycastle Museum resulting from the outline business case, and to seek approval to address additional health & safety structural works required for the site.

2.0 Background

The Cultural Strategy 2016-21 identified a requirement to carry out an analysis of need and options appraisal for museums facility provision within Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council. In 2017, Council appointed Blueprint Development Consultancy and Associates to carry out this work.

The appraisal identified a range of issues and challenges in relation to Ballycastle Museum specifically highlighting the poor state of the existing museum building/site and cited that investment decisions were required by council in order to sustain the collection while considering the merits of investing in the 300 year old listed museum building itself.

A report with recommendations was brought to Council in May 2018 and subsequently approved. Recommendations included an agreement to complete an Outline Business Case for the Ballycastle museum to establish the feasibility of restoring the listed building, providing interpretative fit out, public toilets and a lift to ensure accessibility within the building.

Council subsequently appointed McGarry Consulting to prepare the Outline Business Case. This was completed and presented, alongside a series of recommendations to committee in November 2019.

The business case report concluded that there is a need to preserve and promote local heritage, increase the tourist offering of Ballycastle and regenerate the town (address vacant and underused sites), in particular on Castle Street. The report affirmed that there was also a need to examine the sustainability, storage and marketing of Council's museums and place any potential development in the context of possible future civic or recreation investments in the town.

In December 2019, council agreed to proceed with option 2 with outline costs of circa £1,012,459 as outlined in the business case, including the development of the existing site with a two storey block, disabled friendly toilets, a lift and additional storage, compliant with legislation surrounding listed buildings and that officers bring further reports to Council for consideration in relation to the additional steps contained within the report recommendations *prior* to proceeding to stage 2 of Council's capital programme.

3.0 Progress on Short Term Actions

3.1 Council completes the necessary works to ensure the Castle Street building is safe, free from pest infestation and /or further significant deterioration.

Quotes had been received to prepare the building for treatment including removal of the collection to Sheskburn House. This work was planned for the Winter of 2020 – 2021.

Due to the impact of the pandemic, the appointed contractor was unable to move onsite until January 2021. As work commenced with the removal of render and wall finishes, further structural deterioration, primarily in terms of timber structural supports, was identified raising concerns in relation to the structural integrity of the building.

Following consultation, the Capital Works Department commissioned an inspection of the building by structural and electrical engineers, resulting in advice that access to the building should cease until health and safety works were addressed.

The timbers affected consists primarily of purlins to which the existing first floor joists bear. These have deteriorated, as a consequence of dry and wet rot, resulting in structural strength failure. Consequently, the first floor is no longer accessible as existing floor joists may fail, with the building being deemed unsafe to access for operational purposes and public viewing.

The building itself is Grade B+ listed, with the need to maintain and preserve the asset, given its historical significance, and legislative listing status.

3.1.1 Proposed Programme of works:

Quotations for works will be carried out by the Capital Works Department, to determine current market conditions, and comply with Councils Procurement Policy.

The works will be carried out in single phase approach, with on-site activities envisaged to take two weeks. However, the risk to programme will include any requirements and approval as set out by HED, Historical Buildings. Such approvals may take in the order of 16 weeks to achieve.

In order to mitigate the risk against potential delay in carrying out such essential Health & Safety works, the Capital Works Department have begun the process of engagement with the Department, (HED), to present findings and a way forward, due to the critical nature of such works.

3.1.2 Proposed intervention works:-

The proposed intervention works to be undertaken, consist of:-

- a. Temporary propping to absorb loadings from first floor joists,
- b. Installation of permanent props to support end points of existing floor joists, and generally absorb the loadings over the ceiling area.
- c. Electrical works, to include the separation of 2no. supplies which enter the building, which has the potential for a health and safety risk.

3.1.3 Statutory approvals:-

The following key statutory applications and approvals will be required, prior to works commencing:-

- Building Control.
- HED, (Historical Buildings).

3.1.4 Estimated costs* for delivery of such intervention works:-

The below figures have been split into 2no. distinct categories, which are as follows:-

- a. Professional:- £3,840.
- b. Statutory applications:- £1,200.
- c. Archaeology related services:- £2,800.
- d. Construction related works, plus £3,000 contingency:- £19, 500.

Total: - £27, 340+ VAT (estimated)

**Capital Works are developing the scheme design costs with the Quantity Surveyor, and as such should projected costs vary, further notification will be provided to the committee.*

Council decision is required to confirm revenue expenditure.

3.2 A Council wide museums storage policy is undertaken.

The first stage was to undertake a collections review in the Juniper Hill store following the two collection moves from Cloonavin and Flowerfield.

Staff had commenced this work, however the subsequent pandemic resulted in Museum staff having restricted access to collections and offices to progress. This work is now scheduled to recommence May 2021 and continue through into the Autumn with all collections.

In the meantime, sufficient work had been completed to anticipate central storage requirements to cost up this option. A report will be brought to Council September 2021.

3.3 On line marketing presence should be further developed.

Ballycastle Museum now has its own social media presence where information on opening hours, programmes along with regular posts on interesting items in the collection, can be found. This is in addition to www.niarchive.org which has information on museum collections, heritage projects and other information.

3.4 Council investigates potential additional usage of the museum building.

As part of this process, the Council will seek to confirm the condition and accessibility of the former gaol cells, believed to be on adjoining private land.

No further action due to COVID 19 lockdown.

3.5 Council should consider an enhanced role in the operation/delivery of services with Friends of Ballycastle Museum (FoBM).

In January 2020, Council Officers met with the group to explore their interest in increasing their role. Some volunteers expressed preference to continuing as offering the front of house services. Others were keen to be involved in the capital project in some way in terms of advice, guidance and programme development.

Council's Community Development team engaged with the group to consider their needs in the immediate and medium term and have provided support to the group in terms of governance and planning.

Museum Services have been working on an ongoing basis with the group on local heritage publications and exhibition materials and will continue to do so as lockdown eases.

Prior to lockdown, Museum Services had been working with Council's Events team and Ballycastle Community Development Group to consider developing the offer for the Lammas Fair with a view to developing a Heritage Lottery Fund application with a focus on the museum and its adjacent Naylor's Row. This work is ongoing.

3.6 Any significant investment should take place within the context of a new town masterplan/ development plan for Ballycastle.

The Ballycastle Masterplan is currently being reviewed as directed by the Department with engagement scheduled for members. Council departments and statutory agencies will participate in this process in early May. It is anticipated this project will provide an opportunity to further enhance any redevelopment plans which may arise for the Diamond and Castle Street area.

3.7 An Equality Impact and Review of Disability access.

Northern Ireland Museums Council funded an Access Audit of the current setup, in the context of potential development of the Museum.

Ballycastle Museum was also one of the sites explored in the Peace IV Understanding Our Project: Accessible Heritage Project by Glenshane Care Home and RBIB Visually Impaired Group. Full results are available on www.niarchive.org.

The Equality Screening process for Summer – Autumn programmes is underway.

4 Mitigations to address restricted access to Museums provision summer 20/21

As the facility will be subject to structural works during the normal seasonal opening period, the Museums Service have proposed that an alternative animation programme will be put in place to mitigate against the temporary closure of the facility. This will include the following:

June to August:

- Pop up museums at Ballycastle seafront markets, subject to final confirmation with organisers (Naturally North Coast & Glens).
- Shop front display (pop up museum).
- Covid 19 time capsule project with schools and the Fold.
- Ballycastle Museum Phone box at Marina with images.
- August Street art project with Taise Banner.

September – December

- 'Who Do You Think You Are' project with Ballycastle, Glens and Rathlin Island.
- Alex Blair workshops.
- Ballycastle Museum Phone box at Marina images display.
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5 Recommendation

It is recommended that Council approves proceeding with the necessary structural health & safety works to Ballycastle Museum on the basis of the plan and estimated costs provided by Council's Capital Works Department as contained in section 3.1.1 – 3.1.4 of the report at an estimated cost of **£27, 340+ VAT** (subject to the outcome of the procurement process).