

**PERTH AND KINROSS COUNCIL****Property Sub-Committee – 18 August 2010****ABERFELDY TOWN HALL: DECLARATION OF SURPLUS BUILDING****Joint Report by The Head of Property and  
The Head of Cultural & Community Services, Education and Children's  
Services**

This report details the proposed transfer of Council activities and services from Aberfeldy Town Hall to the new Breadalbane Campus. The report notes the proposed programme and outlines progress made with regard to a potential community buy-out of the facilities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Committee is asked to note that:

- i) Council led activities currently being managed by Perth and Kinross Leisure (PKL) from Aberfeldy Town Hall are to be transferred to the new Breadalbane Campus. The utilisation of the Breadalbane Campus with its enhanced sport, leisure and arts facilities will mean that the Town Hall will become surplus to the Council's requirement and therefore requires to be declared surplus.
- ii) Whilst the new Breadalbane Campus is due to open in December 2010, it is recommended that the closure date of the Hall be deferred until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 in order that existing booking commitments can be fulfilled.
- iii) The community has expressed an interest in a community buy-out of the facilities and are currently preparing a business case for scrutiny.
- iv) The Council's previous commitment to support the installation of new kitchen facilities. This commitment equated to 50% of the value up to a maximum investment level of £15,000.

**BACKGROUND**

1. In 2009 the Scottish Government, in partnership with COSLA, published its Scottish Community Empowerment Action Plan. At the heart of this policy is the belief that communities become empowered if they have the ability to do things for themselves. Owning its own assets is an example of how a community can become empowered and in Perth and Kinross we are keen to support our communities in this way.
2. As a result of developing the new Community Campus at Breadalbane and the wide range of facilities it offers, in 2008 Education and Children's Services discussed with the community its intention to declare the Aberfeldy Town Hall surplus to requirements once the new facilities were open. The community in Aberfeldy were naturally concerned about the impending closure of the hall

and a solution was sought with the preferred option of working towards community ownership. In order to move forward the Council agreed to provide community capacity support to the community in progressing towards community ownership.

3. Aberfeldy Town Hall Steering Group was set up after a community engagement exercise which identified the key building blocks of action required to move towards community ownership. The community capacity worker has continued to work closely with the group and has ensured the wider community are kept informed of progress and that a business case, which is financially robust, is developed.
4. In addition to support from the Council, the Town Hall Steering Group has been successful in its bid to become one of eight demonstration projects across Scotland being funded by the Scottish Government through its Promoting Asset Transfer programme and being taken forward on their behalf by the Development Trust Association Scotland (DTAS). A worker from DTAS has been assigned to the group and an initial action plan has been developed.
5. The Aberfeldy Town Hall is a grade 'B' listed building constructed in c1890 and is classified as a common good asset. It should be noted that because this is a common good asset any subsequent disposal of the Hall may need the consent of the Sheriff in terms of section 75 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 and any consent given may be subject to conditions imposed by the Sheriff.
6. Following the discovery of severe dry rot, the facilities were refurbished in 2009.

## **PROPOSALS**

7. The facility is currently operated by Perth and Kinross Leisure through a service level agreement with Education & Children's Services. With the opening of the new Breadalbane Campus on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2010 current services will transfer to the new campus thus rendering the current Town Hall surplus to the Council's requirements.
8. In preparation for the future closure of the facilities, the Council has been engaging with the community regarding a potential transfer to community ownership of the Town Hall. The recommendation outlined in paragraph ii) of this report defers the closure date until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 in order to give the community the opportunity to develop the capacity to take on the building and prepare a business case to evidence future sustainable operation of the Hall.
9. Following scrutiny by officers of the community's business case, a further report will be presented to Committee for consideration prior to the intended closure date of Aberfeldy Town Hall.

10. In line with the Council's previous commitment and subject to the approval of the transfer to community ownership, a scheme will be developed for the installation of a new kitchen. This element of work was deferred at the time of the general refurbishment at which point a commitment was given by the Council to provide half the new kitchen facilities up to a maximum value of £15,000. The purpose of this investment is that it forms a central part of the business case which the community are preparing to ensure the ongoing financial sustainability of the hall after a transfer to community ownership.

## **CONSULTATION**

11. The Head of Finance and the Head of Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

## **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

12. Any capital receipt from the sale of the subjects will accrue to the Aberfeldy Common Good Fund.
13. Following the sale of the subjects there will be annual revenue savings of approximately £14,000 as a result of savings in insurance, utilities, and service contracts.

## **COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN OBJECTIVES 2009-2012**

14. The Council's Corporate Plan 2009-2012 lays out five Objectives which provide clear strategic direction, inform decisions at a corporate and service level and shape resources allocation. This report impacts on the following:-
  - (i) A Safe, Secure and Welcoming Environment
  - (ii) Healthy, Caring Communities
  - (iii) A Prosperous, Sustainable and Inclusive Economy
  - (iv) Educated, Responsible and Informed Citizens
  - (v) Confident, Active and Inclusive Communities

## **EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EqIA)**

15. An equality impact assessment needs to be carried out for functions, policies, procedures or strategies in relation to race, gender and disability and other relevant protected characteristics. This supports the Council's legal requirement to comply with the duty to assess and consult on relevant new and existing policies.
16. The function, policy, procedure or strategy presented in this report was considered under the Corporate Equalities Impact Assessment process (EqIA) with the following outcome:
  - (i) Assessed as **relevant** and the following positive outcomes expected following expected following proposed community buy out;

- Increased participation in town hall activities by the migrant population resident in the area
- Increased participation in town hall activities by people of all ages with a particular focus on young people and older people
- Additional minor improvements to the building to comply with the Disability Discrimination Acts will be built into future plans

## STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

17. The matters presented in this report were considered under the Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 and no further action is required as it does not qualify as a PPS as defined by the Act and is therefore exempt.

## CONCLUSION

18. With the opening of the new Breadalbane Campus, Aberfeldy Town Hall will become surplus to the Council's requirements. The facility will remain in use until a formal closure date of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 to allow the community sufficient time to conclude and submit a business case evidencing the sustainability of possible future operation of the Hall.

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### 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 the above Report.

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