

# Report

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<b>To:</b>	<b>Executive Committee</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>6 July 2011</b>
<b>Prepared by:</b>	<b>Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)</b>

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Proposal to Upgrade Larkhall Housing Office to Provide a Local Integrated Facility</b>
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## 1. Purpose of Report

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:-

- ◆ provide details and recommendations to the Executive Committee on the proposal to upgrade the Housing Office in Union Street, Larkhall to provide accommodation for a Local Integrated Facility.

## 2. Summary of Recommendation(s)/ Actions Required

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve the following recommendation(s):-

- (1) that the proposal to develop a Local Integrated Facility within the current Housing Office, Larkhall is approved.
- (2) that the budget cost of £363,000 is approved subject to the financial provisions in section 6 of this report being in place.
- (3) that the remodelling project is completed during 2011/2012.

## 3. Background

3.1 The Executive Committee at its meeting held on 3 November 2010 approved a report which confirmed the geographical office accommodation model for the Council, which included retaining core offices in Hamilton, Lanark, East Kilbride and Cambuslang, together with satellite offices in Rutherglen, Blantyre, Larkhall and Carluke.

3.2 As part of the National Diagnostic Review, Housing and Technical Resources has realigned its management structure and staff locations to provide financial efficiencies. This has led to the existing Housing Office in Union Street being significantly underutilised. Also under National Diagnostics, it was agreed to close the Larkhall Registrar's office in 2010, which resulted in properties within Larkhall which are compatible with an office environment being limited to:-

- Housing Office and Q&A
- Social Work Area Office
- Library

## 4. Proposals

4.1 Consultation with Resources has identified a number of uses which can be accommodated within the property. In particular, the Executive Director (Community Resources) has confirmed that the accommodation will be suitable for the relocation of the library which is currently located in a building which will require significant future investment.

- 4.2 Consultation with the Executive Director (Enterprise Resources) has identified a number of external agencies who are willing to share the accommodation and allow a Local Integrated Facility to be developed. This will not only provide direct access to Council services but will also allow the public to interface with other compatible external agencies to provide a comprehensive service, particularly to vulnerable client groups. The services and facilities which will be included are:-
- Larkhall Q&A
  - South Lanarkshire Library
  - Money Matters
  - Cashiers Service
  - Education Adult Learning
  - Fast Track Reporting Area
  - Touchdown Areas
  - Bookable Meeting Rooms and Interview Spaces
  - Credit Union
  - Routes to Work
  - Citizens Advice Bureau
  - Job Centre Plus
- 4.3 The Q&A, touchdown facility and bookable meeting and interview spaces within the property will allow Resources to provide a full range of services from this location without the need for dedicated desk spaces. The inclusion of other uses within this building and the introduction of flexible workspace should enable the closure of other properties providing revenue savings and capital receipts.
- 4.4 The current office will require to be remodelled (see Appendix 1) and the budget cost for the project is estimated at £363,000. Funding has been identified for the project and this is detailed in section 6.
- 4.5 The programme for the project is currently being finalised. At this stage the works are expected to last for a period of 12 weeks and, subject to approval and following procurement, will commence towards the end of the current calendar year with completion within the financial year 2011/12.
- 4.6 If approved, the Q&A facility will require to re-locate from this property for a period of 4 weeks during the works programme. It is proposed to operate the Q&A on a reduced service arrangement during this period. Housing and Technical Resources are currently in discussions with the Executive Directors (Community Resources) and (Social Work Resources) to establish the best available temporary location from which to deliver this service.
- 4.7 South Lanarkshire Leisure and Cultural Trust benefits from rates exemption due to its Trust status. This could potentially be at risk within the new Larkhall facility due to the shared nature of the property and the rules surrounding property rating valuations.
- 4.8 Discussions are ongoing with the Assessor to try and agree a design which will allow the library accommodation to comply. Any additional requirements from the assessor may have an impact on the budget costs.
- 5. Employee Implications**
- 5.1 The detailed implications for staff will be confirmed by Resources as the project develops.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The budget estimate for this project is £363,000. The Executive Director (Enterprise Resources) has made provision within the Regeneration budget to fund £250,000 of this project in 2011/12 and the Executive Director (Community Resources) has made provision within the SLLC Capital Programme 2011/12 to fund £23,074 of these works. It is proposed that the shortfall is met through the Housing General Services Capital Fund.
- 6.2 This work will include the remodelling and upgrade of accommodation. The implementation of the model will allow revenue savings and reduced liabilities through the closure of the current Library. This will also provide a potential capital receipt.

## **7. Other Implications**

- 7.1 It is proposed that the Executive Director (Enterprise Resources) develops formal agreements to regularise the occupation by external agencies.

## **8 Equality Impact Assessment and Consultation Arrangements**

- 8.1 An impact assessment will be required for the proposal to relocate the Library and will be undertaken by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Cultural Trust
- 8.2 Consultation with external agencies has taken place through Enterprise Resources. Detailed consultation has taken place with the Executive Directors (Enterprise), (Social Work) and (Community Resources) to agree the final detail of the project. Consultation with staff and Trade Unions will be undertaken by Resources affected.
- 8.3 Consultation with customers of the Library will be undertaken by South Lanarkshire Leisure and Cultural Trust through established channels.
- 8.4 Consultation with tenants/residents on the work planned will also take place through Housing and Technical Resources upon further development of the detailed works programme.

**Lindsay Freeland**

**Executive Director (Housing and Technical Resources)**

15 June 2011

## **Link(s) to Council Objectives/Improvement Themes**

- Improve the Quality, Access and Availability of Housing
- Efficient and Effective Use of Resources
- Improve Quality of the Physical Environment
- Partnership Working, Community Leadership and Engagement

## **Previous References**

- ◆ Executive Committee Report Geographical Office Review dated 3 November 2010

**List of Background Papers**

None

**Contact for Further Information**

If you would like to inspect the background papers or want further information, please contact: - John Gordon

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