

REPORT TO: EDUCATION COMMITTEE - 28 JUNE 2010
REPORT ON: HARRIS ACADEMY - REVIEW OF FEASIBILITY STUDY
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
REPORT NO: 352-2010

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report advises the Committee as to progress on the review of the original feasibility study on the refurbishment of Harris Academy.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that the Education Committee:

- (i) notes the progress made to date on the review of the original feasibility study on the refurbishment of Harris Academy;
- (ii) notes that work to date has included the consideration of five options for Harris Academy (paragraph 4.4 below);
- (iii) agrees that further investigation of options 3 ('transformation of existing building') and 4 ('new build on existing site') should be undertaken;
- (iv) agrees that options 1 ('do nothing'), 2 ('refurbish existing building') and 5 ('new build on another site') should be rejected; and
- (v) instructs the Director of Education to bring a final report on the review of the original feasibility study for the consideration of the Education Committee on 27 September 2010.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 There is provision in the Capital Plan 2010-2013 for this project at a gross cost of £27m less capital grant of £18m, leaving net capital expenditure of £9m. If the costs are £31.25m per the current Scottish Government approval, the net cost after capital grant of £20.84m would be £10.41m, resulting in an additional cost to the Council of £1.41m. This would require to be built into the next review of the Capital Plan.

4.0 MAIN TEXT

Background

4.1 Reference is made to Article IV of the minute of the meeting of the Education Committee of 7 December 2009 when the Committee noted

the contents of Agenda Note AN250-2009 including, *inter alia*, the proposal that the Education Capital Projects Director would convene a Management Group to review the original feasibility study on the refurbishment of Harris Academy and produce a comprehensive report reviewing the options appraised.

- 4.2 Members will also be aware that on 2 June 2010 it was confirmed by the Scottish Government that the replacement of Harris Academy has been included in the first tranche of Scotland's Schools for the Future programme and that it will attract grant funding of up to £20.84m commencing in financial year 2013/14 from the Scottish Government via the Scottish Futures Trust. The grant funding of £20.84m is based on two thirds of the projected capital cost of £31.25m. It was also confirmed that the preferred procurement route for the construction contract for Harris Academy will be through the Scottish Government sponsored procurement consortium, the East Central Territory Hub.

Progress with Review

- 4.3 The first meeting of the Management Group comprising officers from Education, Finance, City Development and Architectural Services took place on 10 December 2009 in the form of a workshop with the purpose of identifying and exploring possible options for the upgrading or replacement of Harris Academy and of allocating tasks that required further investigation and/or detailed work to working groups of appropriate officers.
- 4.4 The options that were considered were:
- (1) to do nothing (other than addressing ongoing maintenance requirements);
 - (2) to refurbish existing buildings (as original feasibility study);
 - (3) to transform/reconfigure as much as is practical of 1930s building, demolishing other buildings including part of 1930s building, and adding new build where required;
 - (4) to construct a new building on the existing site (following demolition of the existing buildings); and
 - (5) to construct a new building on another site.
- 4.5 Following discussion within the working group, it was agreed not to investigate further option 1 ('do nothing') and option 2 ('refurbish existing buildings') since they could not fully address the constraints of the existing accommodation and therefore compromised the delivery of education for staff and pupils.
- 4.6 The tasks allocated to working groups included:
- (i) projecting future S1 intake and roll capacity for new school - these were subsequently confirmed as 220 and 1185 respectively;

- (ii) modelling teaching accommodation requirements based on the maximum S1 intake, S5/6 staying on rates and existing and projected subject timetables;
- (iii) meeting with school senior management team and individually with principal teachers to discuss preferred departmental and resource adjacencies and also departmental accommodation requirements;
- (iv) producing an indicative accommodation schedule based on (i) - (iii) above;
- (v) developing concept plans based on (iv) above for options 3, 4 and 5;
- (vi) establishing whether there was an acceptable alternative site of sufficient size (approx. 8 hectares) within the catchment of Harris Academy - it was subsequently confirmed that there is no other site available;
- (vii) carrying out title checks;
- (viii) carrying out a tree survey;
- (ix) confirming availability of Rockwell for decant purposes; and
- (x) meeting with Historic Scotland to discuss the possibility of demolishing all or part of the 1930s Category B Listed building - an initial meeting took place in Harris Academy on 3 February 2010.

- 4.7 When it was confirmed that there was no alternative site available for Harris, it was decided that concept plans for option 5 could not be progressed.
- 4.8 Following the development of concept plans for options 3 and 4, it was confirmed that the 'new build' option 4 was much more efficient and delivered a school which met all of the educational, social and access requirements, even on the difficult site.
- 4.9 The same could not be said of the 'transformation' option 3, which was always a compromise between achieving the required educational, social and access requirements and retaining some or all of the 1930s building. In addition, the more of the 1930s building that is retained, the higher will be the projected construction costs since transforming the 1930s building will be less cost efficient than new build.

Historic Scotland

- 4.10 At the meeting with representatives of Historic Scotland on 3 February 2010, it was made clear (and subsequently confirmed in writing) that their view is that the 1930s Category B Listed building should be retained and adapted to make it "better fit to meet modern educational needs".
- 4.11 Historic Scotland further indicated that should we wish to proceed with proposals which involve total or partial demolition of the 1930s building we would need to demonstrate that:

- (a) the building is not of special interest; or
 - (b) the building is incapable of repair; or
 - (c) the demolition of the building is essential to delivering significant benefits to the economic growth of the wider community; or
 - (d) the repair of the building is not economically viable and that it has been marketed at a price reflecting its location and condition to potential restoring purchasers for a reasonable period.
- 4.12 For the Council to be able to deliver either option 3 or option 4, Historic Scotland will need to agree to modify or withdraw its listing of the 1930s building. This is likely to involve the submission of a Conservation Study justifying the eventual proposals.
- 4.13 To allow the Council to take an informed decision as to which option to develop, the options need to be fully investigated to identify the risks attached to each. The main unknown at this time is how much, if any, of the 1930s building will be able to be demolished.
- 4.14 Accordingly, LDN Architects have been commissioned to carry out what is effectively the first stage of a Conservation Study by way of preparing a Conservation Statement and Appraisal of Development Options to review whether it is possible to reconcile conservation and educational needs. LDN Architects are acting as intermediaries for the Council with Historic Scotland in respect of aspects of this Conservation Study.

Capital Expenditure

- 4.15 It is estimated that the 'new build' option 4 will be able to be delivered at a capital cost of £31.25m which is in line with the Scottish Futures Trust estimate (see paragraph 4.2 above). It is anticipated that the 'transformation' option 3 could cost between 10% and 20% more than the new build option. However, more accurate costs have still to be developed and key to these will be the outcome of the Conservation Study and Historic Scotland's view on that study.

Summary of Progress to Date

- 4.16 As described in the foregoing paragraphs, detailed and robust work is being undertaken by both Council staff and LDN Architects with a view to compiling a comprehensive and costed feasibility study for presentation to the Education Committee. Due to the sensitive and protracted nature of ongoing negotiations with Historic Scotland it is likely that the final feasibility study with appended block drawing options can be considered by the Education Committee at its meeting on 27 September 2010.

Project Timeline

- 4.17 Notwithstanding the restraints in terms of ongoing consultations with Historic Scotland in respect of design development, it is likely that a start on site could be made in the autumn of 2013. This target date would fit in

with the SFT profile which indicates that Dundee's contribution will commence during financial year 2013/14.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been screened for any policy implications in respect of sustainability, strategic environmental assessment, anti-poverty, equality impact assessment and risk management. There are no major issues.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 6.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) and Director of Finance have been consulted on this report.

7.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 None.

Jim Collins
Director of Education

17 June 2010
JC/GRP/MM