

**DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leisure and Arts Services Committee - 19 February 2007

**REPORT ON:** Public Access to the McManus Collections Unit

**REPORT BY:** Director of Leisure and Communities

**REPORT NO:** 95-2007

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval from Committee on proposals for public access to the newly redeveloped McManus Collections Unit.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 The Committee is asked to approve:

2.1.1 The proposals for public opening of the Unit, which will be reviewed following completion of the Refurbishment Project.

2.2 The Committee is requested to note:

2.2.1 That public consultation will be undertaken to ensure that the future opening times of the Unit are responsive to public demand.

2.2.1 The temporary arrangements for staff accommodation within the Unit which are enabling them to prepare for the re-opening of the refurbished McManus Galleries and Museums.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**4.0 SUSTAINABILITY POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

**4.1 Sustainability**

None.

**4.2 Strategic Environmental Assessment**

Not required.

**4.3 Anti-Poverty**

Opportunities for culture, leisure and recreation are freely available to all.

**5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The new Collections Unit has been designed to be fully accessible to all.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND**

- 6.1 The first phase of the McManus Project comprised the removal from the McManus Galleries and Museum of all the displays and collections, and the relocation of staff, to enable construction work to begin.
- 6.2 A key component of phase one was the creation of the Dundee Collections Unit (formerly the Barrack Street Museum). This was completed on schedule and on budget, and staff relocated there in December 2005. The Unit is an integral part of the McManus Galleries and Museum, housing the majority of the City's collections. The collections, comprising over 150,000 items, were decanted to this refurbished building between January and the end of May 2006.
- 6.3 The purpose-built storage racking which has been installed, supported by a computer-based documentation system, will offer unprecedented access to the collections. The building currently accommodates the staff displaced from the McManus Galleries and Museums, who will return there on completion of the project, as well as staff who will continue to work in the Unit. This has necessitated restrictions being placed on public opening, however, the importance of providing opportunities for public access in the interim is recognised. These opportunities will be organised taking into account the staff work programmes.
- 6.4 Under the terms and conditions of the grant aid received by Historic Scotland, the Department is committed to making the building accessible to the public a minimum of 25 days per annum once the McManus Development Project is completed.
- 6.5 The refurbished building, and work being undertaken by the staff are generating interest from other local authorities and professionals in the field. Informal visits will be scheduled for such groups. Recently, visits have taken place by parties from the Scottish Conservation Centre, Scottish Arts Council, Scottish Museums Council, the National Museums of Scotland, East Renfrewshire and Falkirk Councils, as well as Friends of Dundee Archives and colleagues from other Council Departments.

## **7.0 PROPOSAL**

- 7.1 It is proposed to manage public access in a structured way for a pilot period between now and the end of 2007, every second Friday being designated as a day when all group visits would be focused. Members of the public would be able to book a guided tour of the facility and learn about the work of the service. The first of these opportunities would be offered on Friday 2 March 2007. Every effort will be made to accommodate group visits requested outwith these designated days. The Unit will also participate in organised events such as "Doors Open Day", which attracted 48 visitors in September 2006.
- 7.2 The opportunity will be taken during visits to conduct public consultation exercises to determine a preferred pattern of opening hours for the future. The information will be gathered using a questionnaire containing specific questions on suitable opening dates and times. Focus groups will also be consulted on the Museum's plans for the future, and feedback analysed.
- 7.3 The results of both the Opening Hours questionnaire and the feedback from the Focus Groups will inform the Service's Action Plan for 2008. This public consultation exercise will also be used as a tool to increase public awareness of the project's progress and of the future services and facilities to be provided by the Arts

and Heritage Section of the Leisure and Communities Department.

**8.0 CONSULTATION**

8.1 The Chief Executive, Depute Chief Executive (Support Services), Depute Chief Executive (Finance), and Assistant Chief Executive (Community Planning) have been consulted on this report and are in agreement with its contents.

**9.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 None.

**STEWART MURDOCH  
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE AND COMMUNITIES  
29 JANUARY 2007**