

Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee

10.00am, Tuesday 17 May 2016

Museum of Fire, 76–78 Lauriston Place

Item number	7.6
Report number	
Executive/routine	Routine
Wards	11 – City Centre

Executive summary

On 4 February 2016, the Council, having considered a motion by Councillor Day regarding the uncertain future of the Museum of Fire, which occupies premises owned by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) at 76-78 Lauriston Place, called for a report to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee outlining the current status of the building and options for its future.

This report provides an update on SFRS's proposals.

Links

Coalition pledges	P31
Council outcomes	CO20
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Museum of Fire, 76–78 Lauriston Place

Recommendations

- 1.1 That Committee notes:
 - 1.1.1 that the Council has no legal interest in the property at 76-78 Lauriston Place;
 - 1.1.2 the intention of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) to dispose of the building; and
 - 1.1.3 that SFRS is committed to relocating the Museum of Fire to alternative premises to be identified within the city boundary and that the Council is assisting SFRS with its search.

Background

- 2.1 The SFRS premises at 76-78 Lauriston Place, as shown outlined in red on the attached plan (appendix 1), were built on land acquired by the Lord Provost and Magistrates of the City of Edinburgh around the mid 19th century. The building was erected around 1900 and now accommodates the Museum of Fire.
- 2.2 Originally, fire fighting was a function of the Local Authority. This situation continued until around 1941 when a National Fire Service was established by central government as a temporary measure during the war.
- 2.3 After the war, The Fire Services Act 1947, made provision for the transfer of fire fighting functions not only from the National Fire Service, but from the local authorities themselves, to new bodies each of which would be independent of the local authorities but which would represent a combination of several local authority areas.
- 2.4 The 1947 Act required Local Authorities to draw up an administrative scheme to form the basis of the future fire service covering their areas. The scheme would then be ratified by the appropriate central government minister (in Scotland, the Secretary of State for Scotland) by virtue of an Order which would bring the new bodies into existence.
- 2.5 Thus, in 1948, the South Eastern Fire Area Joint Committee came into existence by virtue of the South Eastern Fire Area Administration Scheme Order 1948. This covered the former counties of Berwick, East Lothian, Midlothian, Peebles, Roxburgh, Selkirk and West Lothian and the county of the city of Edinburgh.

- 2.6 In addition, by virtue of this Order, property used in connection with fire fighting functions was transferred to the new Joint Committee. The Joint Committee became, in due course, Lothian and Borders Fire Board and now Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.
- 2.7 Although the right of ownership in the properties used for fire fighting purposes was transferred in 1948 to the new Joint Committees and in turn to their successor bodies, unless there was also transfer of the legal title to the new bodies, the actual legal title continued to be registered in the name of the original local authorities.
- 2.8 This means that, in the case of Lauriston Place, although the Joint Committee acquired the right of ownership in 1948 and that is now vested, by virtue of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012, in SFRS, the legal title to the property continues to be registered in the Sasine Register in the name of the Lord Provost etc of Edinburgh. In effect, the registered title has not caught up with the actual legal position. Accordingly, the property at Lauriston Place is owned by SFRS and the Council no longer has an interest in the property.
- 2.9 The 1948 Order included provisions whereby surplus properties should revert to the local authority; however, these provisions were repealed by the Fire (Scotland) Act 2005.
- 2.10 The Council at its meeting in February 2016, approved the following motion by Councillor Day concerning the property at 76-78 Lauriston Place, owned by the SFRS, part of which is occupied by the Museum of Fire:

“The Museum of Fire, honouring Edinburgh’s role as home of the first municipal fire brigade in Europe, faces an uncertain future and Council notes with grave concern that this asset to the city may be under threat of closure by the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service.

The Museum of Fire displays a unique collection of vintage fire engines and fire-fighting equipment from 1426 to the present day and charts the history of the Edinburgh brigade founded by pioneer James Braidwood in 1824.

Council also notes the fantastic learning experience the museum provides not only to the citizens of Edinburgh but visitors from around the world and how this matches with the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service’s Strategic Plan to be a modern and outward-looking service that will play a leading role in ensuring community safety.

Council calls for a report to the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee in two cycles outlining the current status of the building and options for its future.”

Main report

- 3.1 The SFRS has advised that its Board resolved to sell the property at 76-78 Lauriston Place, part of which is occupied by the Museum of Fire.

- 3.2 The Board also resolved that the SFRS is committed to relocating the Museum of Fire to alternative premises to be located within the Edinburgh city boundary. The SFRS is currently undertaking a search for suitable premises and following a request from SFRS, the Council is assisting with this exercise. In addition, SFRS has formed a project group including volunteer representation, to oversee the museum's relocation.
- 3.3 In March 2016, the SFRS provided the Council with written confirmation of its intentions for the property as set out above and advised that it is in discussion with parties regarding the possible sale of the property on a negotiated basis, however, if no agreement can be reached, SRFS intends to place the property on the open market.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Not applicable.

Financial impact

- 5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 There are no risk, policy, compliance or governance impacts as a result of this report.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 There are no equalities impacts arising from this report and the SFRS, in dealing with the property, will undertake its own equality assessments under the Equalities Act 2010.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 No sustainability impacts have been identified in relation to this report.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 Not applicable.

Background reading/external references

[Motion to Council, 4 February 2016](#)

Hugh Dunn

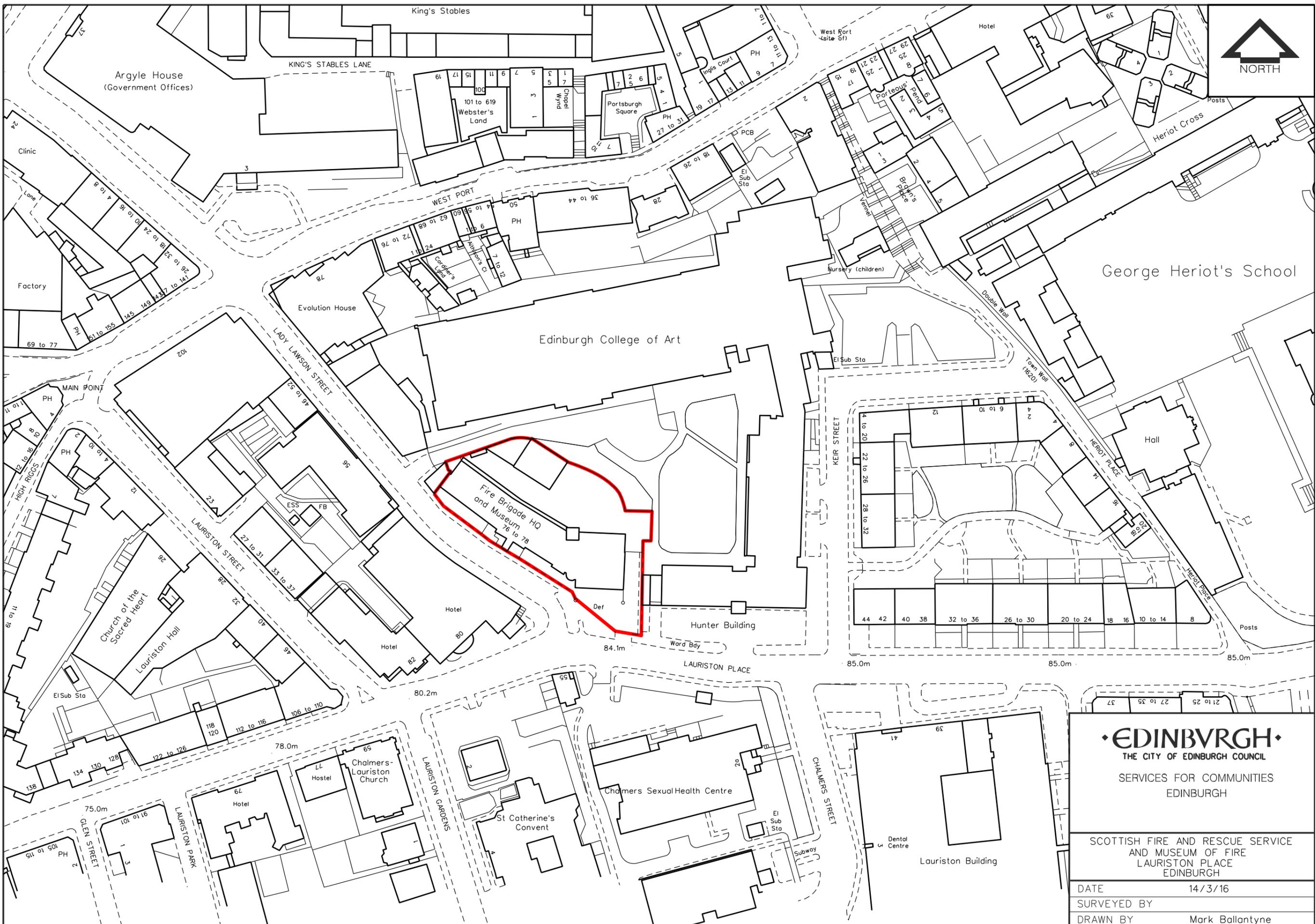
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Links

Coalition pledges	P31 – Maintain our City’s reputation as the cultural capital of the world by continuing to support and invest in our cultural infrastructure.
Council outcomes	CO20 – Culture, sport and major events – Edinburgh continues to be a leading cultural city where culture and sport play a central part in the lives and futures of citizens.
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 – Edinburgh’s Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all.
Appendices	Appendix 1: Location Plan.



SITE PLAN

PHOTOGRAPHICALLY REDUCED NOT TO SCALE

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SERVICES FOR COMMUNITIES EDINBURGH	
SCOTTISH FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE AND MUSEUM OF FIRE LAURISTON PLACE EDINBURGH	
DATE	14/3/16
SURVEYED BY	
DRAWN BY	Mark Ballantyne
SCALE	N.T.S.
NEG. NO.	