

Redevelopment of Riddle's Court - Update

Education, Children and Families Committee

31 January 2012

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To provide an update on the progress being made on the development of Riddle's Court and the leasing arrangements with the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT).

2 Summary

- 2.1 Reference is made to the report approved by the Education, Children and Families committee at its meeting on 15 March 2011. This report gives details of the leasing arrangements with the SHBT and highlights how an agreement for shared use of the building by Children and Families, the Workers Education Association (WEA) and Edinburgh City Youth Café Association (6VT) is being progressed.

3 Main report

- 3.1 A decision was taken at the Finance and Resource Committee of the 7 June 2011 to approve a five year lease of Riddle's Court to the Scottish Historic Buildings Trust (SHBT). The terms included an option exercisable by SHBT to enter a 99 year lease, in the event that they successfully secured a fully funded capital project for renovating the building.

Progress to Date

- 3.2 Leasing Arrangements – the SHBT board have now agreed a 5 year lease with the Council. The date of entry has been backdated to 1 September 2011 (i.e. when SHBT moved in under the terms of a license) and there will be a reconciliation of costs Children and Families have continued to incur since that date for the building, offset against the rental income the Council have continued to receive from the Workers Education Association (WEA). The 99 year lease is not triggered until SHBT have all the project funds in place. The 99 year lease document will be finalised in 2012.

The current state of funding applications sought and in the process of being sought is as follows:

- 3.3 Heritage Lottery Fund – A Round 1 Application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund in June 2011. We received confirmation of our Round 1 pass of £2.4 million towards the Capital Project in the Autumn as well as a

development grant of £404,000. Match Funding for the development phase is currently being sought.

- 3.4 Historic Scotland – An application was made to Historic Scotland for their October deadline for a Building Repairs Grant of £500,000 which is their maximum grant available and a decision is awaited.
- 3.5 Architectural Heritage Fund – The Architectural Heritage Fund has awarded a grant of £25,000 towards SHBT staff costs to develop the project.
- 3.6 Donations – Since SHBT moved into the building donations in the order of £2,500 have been received from members of the public who have visited the building during open days and towards the capital project.
- 3.7 Further funding applications will be made over the course of 2012/2013 to secure the balance required for this £5.8m capital project.

Use of the building

- 3.8 SHBT will start to market the building for events in order to bring the property into surplus during the interim years. Any surplus above the property costs will go directly into the Capital Project. This will be done in a number of ways and discussions are currently underway for the following:
- 3.9 Use of the building by local organisations that currently operate within the Old Town. The Edinburgh World Heritage Trust (EWHT) have recently used the building to train bus drivers and blue badge guides and it is hoped that EWHT will become a key stakeholder/user in the building now that their move to the Old Town has been realised.
- 3.10 Open Days to enable the public to look round the building and hear about the plans for its restoration. It is anticipated that Open Days will be on Thursday afternoons from mid-February between 2 – 4pm. Student volunteers will act as room guides and a modest level of interpretation on the building will be provided. Entry will be by donation towards the capital project.
- 3.11 Use of the building for events. Two book launches have been held and Planning Aid has used the building for training. The Edinburgh Decorative and Fine Art Society visited the building on four occasions to receive talks on its architecture, its paint and the work of SHBT as well as a tour and a donation of £1,500 was received for this event.
- 3.12 The Edinburgh College of Art Conservation Course has been using the building for its building recording and pathology project and Edinburgh University Architectural History students have been undertaking projects on the building. Students are also participating in the Open Days as Room Guides and one student is about to start a placement with SHBT working on some aspects of the project.
- 3.13 Use of the building during the various Edinburgh Festivals. Discussions are currently underway with a significant user for the 2012 festival.

- 3.14 WEA use of the building – following discussion with the WEA it has been agreed that use can be made of the Council allocation of space within Riddle’s Court until June 2012. This will support the WEA to make changes to their programme to take account of the changing management arrangements within the building. Over the last few months the WEA has reduced the number of classes using Riddle’s Court and clustered the remaining classes to reduce the number of days required. In addition class fees have been increased to offset room hire charges. The Council’s Community Learning and Development (CLD) section have agreed to use some of its dedicated allocation to support two of the WEA pre-retirement courses to run in May/June 2012.
- 3.15 Jointly, CLD and WEA intend to run two larger scale events in May 2012, the first in May to celebrate Adult Learners Week and the second in September as a ‘Taster’ event to launch the new session.
- 3.16 From September 2012, CLD will make use of the agreed allocation for the Adult Education Programme and other events which require a city centre venue taking account of the schedule for refurbishing the building. Detailed planning for the session commencing in September 2012 will begin in January 2012. CLD use will include some evenings and weekends.
- 3.17 6VT use of the building – discussions between the 6VT Board and Council officers are continuing. At this stage, it has been confirmed to 6VT that they will continue to be based in Riddles Court. Issues regarding the impact of any building improvements on their current base, and in particular the potential building of a lift, have been raised with officers and options to address these issues will be explored with the 6VT Board and the SHBT. The possibility of use of Riddle’s Court outwith their current base has also been discussed and will be considered further in the context of the new management arrangements for the building.
- 3.18 Currently the building is being opened up, many of the rooms are being re-painted and the exterior entrances are being enhanced.
- 3.19 This year Riddle’s Court will be open for the public on Thursday afternoons. Interpretation boards will be installed in the courtyard. Over 2000 people came through the doors on the ‘doors open’ day last Autumn with many making donations towards the restoration on the spot. A regular stream of small donations are coming in to SHBT demonstrating the keen level of interest from the public.
- 3.20 This year there will be a focus on working with schools to encourage them to visit and use the facilities in Riddle’s Court. Some primaries come already as part of existing programmes within the curriculum. SHBT want to develop projects with a new education officer (for which they have applied for funding), teachers and the Children and Families Department. SHBT are in discussion with Grant’s Whisky to use Riddle’s Court as a story telling centre during the Edinburgh Festival.
- 3.21 Management Arrangements – meetings will be scheduled with all key stakeholders to agree the most appropriate management arrangements regarding partners’ access and use of the building.

4 Financial Implications

4.1 Financial implications for Children and Families revenue budget were reported to the Education Children and Families Committee on 15 March 2011.

5 Equalities Impact

5.1 There are no direct equalities impacts arising from this report.

6 Environmental Impact

6.1 There are no adverse environmental impacts arising out of the recommendations contained in this report.

7 Conclusions

7.1 The proposals contained in this report are intended to facilitate the renovation of an historic Council owned building based on a use which will see it retained as a community resource.

8 Recommendations

8.1 To note the progress highlighted in the report and to agree that a further progress report is provided as and when leasing arrangements require to be changed or amended and on conclusion of discussions on management arrangements.

Gillian Tee
Director of Children and Families

Appendices	None.
Contact/tel/Email	David Bruce 0131 469 3795
Wards affected	Ward 11, City Centre
Single Outcome Agreement	Outcome 12
Background Papers	