
THE GREAT TAPESTRY OF SCOTLAND VISITOR CENTRE, GALASHIELS – UPDATE REPORT

Report by Service Director Assets & Infrastructure

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

19 January 2021

1 PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides an update to the report to Executive on 29 August 2019.
- 1.2 Site works commenced on 10 June 2019 under a contract awarded to Ogilvie Construction. The works had been progressing well on site until the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic early in 2020 and the country wide lockdown.
- 1.3 Following a resumption of construction in July 2020, significant progress has been made with the project and the works on site are currently within the final 18 weeks. The project remains on programme for a 2021 opening.
- 1.4 Finalised costs for the exhibition/display cases fit out have now been presented to the Council and these are in excess of the allowance within the current budget.
- 1.5 To resolve this, additional funding from the Emergency & Unplanned Scheme fund for 2020/21 is being requested.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 I recommend that the Executive Committee:-

- (a) **Notes the contents of this report.**
- (b) **Approve that £316k is allocated from the 2020/21 Emergency & Unplanned Schemes fund to allow completion of the building fit out.**

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Great Tapestry of Scotland is a unique community arts project which was created to stitch and present the entire history of Scotland. It was the brainchild of renowned writer Alexander McCall-Smith, historian Alistair Moffat and artist Andrew Crummy. It is 143 metres long, currently has 160 panels and was handcrafted by more than 1,000 volunteer stitchers who spent over 50,000 hours working on the Tapestry. The GTS initially went on display at the Scottish Parliament (2013) before touring around Scotland.
- 3.2 On 22 December 2016, the Council approved the associated business case and agreed to build a new building in Galashiels to house the Great Tapestry of Scotland
- 3.3 Works on site commenced on 10 June 2019 under a contract signed with Ogilvie Construction following a public procurement process. Works proceeded to programme during the remainder of that year but were significantly impacted by the outbreak of COVID-19 in the UK and of the national lockdown in March 2020.
- 3.4 Works recommenced in July 2020 in accordance with the Scottish Government's routemap to recovery of the construction industry. The recommenced construction works have been undertaken using appropriate COVID-19 safe systems of work to ensure that risks to the workforce are minimised wherever possible.
- 3.5 The Project Team have worked hard to deliver the design and construction elements of the contract within the budget approved by Council in December 2016. As the contract was awarded in 2019, the project has encountered a range of inflationary pressures and necessary technical adjustments, as is typical in such a building project. The unique design of the building has also presented challenges that have all been addressed. To date all inflationary pressures, all building adjustments and the implications of COVID 19 have been addressed within the 2016 approved budget.

4 SPECIALIST EXHIBITION DISPLAY CASES

- 4.1 At the time of entering into the construction contract with Ogilvie Construction, an estimate allowance of £250k was made to cover the final design, fabrication and installation of the cases that will display the Tapestry. The display cases were not, however, included within the contract at award on the basis that they would be instructed in under contractual mechanisms at an appropriate point in the construction programme following their final design. This is a relatively normal approach within construction contracts for specialist elements of this nature.

Given the unique nature of the 143m long Tapestry, the display cases are arguably the single most important element within the overall construction project as they allow for the true interpretation of the story of Scotland. The orientation, positioning, lighting and audio visual components of the display cases have all been carefully designed to maximise the impact and power of the Tapestry.

- 4.2 The costs for the display cases have recently been finalised. Unfortunately, this cost exceeds the estimate allowance set within the project budget at contract award. The options to contain the increased cost for the display cases are now all exhausted and additional budget will be required to fully fund the construction and installation of the cases.
- 4.3 It is intended that the display cases will now be instructed into the contract. The post COVID-19 outbreak timing of this instruction will result in systems of work that will take longer than before COVID-19. The increased cost estimate therefore also contains an element of what would be referred to as prolongation as a consequence of COVID 19.
- 4.4 The overall costs of the display cases requires an additional £316k to enable the project to be completed. This will be required in 2020/21. It is proposed to fund this from the Emergency & Unplanned Schemes within the Capital Investment Plan.

5 IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial

- (a) The Capital project budget for the construction of the Great Tapestry of Scotland was approved in 2016 at £6.797M.
- (b) The budget pressure to allow for the completion of the project to include the display cases requires an additional £316k. This is proposed to be allocated from the Emergency & Unplanned Schemes fund for 2020/21.
- (c) There has been an investigation of the option to lease the display cases so that they would be funded through a revenue budget rather than capital. This option was discounted on the basis of the pressure this would place on current revenue budgets.

5.2 Risk and Mitigations

At the time of the contract award for the project, the budget contained an allowance for the exhibition display cases. This was set and based on the best available information at that stage. The detailed design of the display cases, however, has resulted in costs that exceed this allowance. There is a risk to the overall visitor experience if the display cases do not present the Tapestry in its most advantageous setting.

5.3 Equalities

- (a) An Equalities Impact Assessment has not been carried out on this report.
- (b) It is anticipated that there are no adverse impact due to race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation or religion/belief arising from the proposals in this report.

5.4 Acting Sustainably

There are no sustainably issues arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.5 Carbon Management

There are no significant effects on carbon emissions arising from the proposals contained in this report.

5.6 Rural Proofing

This report does not relate to new or amended policy or strategy and as a result rural proofing is not an applicable consideration.

5.7 Changes to Scheme of Administration or Scheme of Delegation

There are no changes to be made to either the Scheme of Administration or the Scheme of Delegation as a result of the proposals contained in this report.

6 CONSULTATION

6.1 The Executive Director (Finance & Regulatory), the Monitoring Officer/Chief Legal Officer, the Chief Officer Audit and Risk, the Service Director HR & Communications, the Clerk to the Council and Corporate Communications have been consulted and any comments received have been incorporated into the final report.

Approved by

John Curry

Service Director Assets & Infrastructure Signature

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Background Papers: Report to Executive – 27 August 2019

Previous Minute Reference: Nil

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