

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL
INVERNESS CITY COMMITTEE
Monday 8th June 2009

Agenda Item	13.3
Report No	ICC 46/09

Cromwell Road Clock Tower

Report by Inverness City Manager

Summary

This report informs the City Committee on proposed improvements to Cromwell Road Clock Tower which was built in 1653. It provides Members with an update on the building to ensure that it is wind and water tight. Cromwell Tower (the Tower) was listed as a category B building in 1971.

This contributes to Single Outcome Agreement 12: We value and enjoy our built environment and protect and enhance it for future generations.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** The clock tower stands beside an oil storage depot in an area significant for its military and political history and serves as a notable landmark feature. Historic Scotland has been consulted and the Highland Council Planning Service also because the Tower is a category B listed building.
- 1.2** Cromwell Tower is owned by the Highland Council under the Common Good Fund who has responsibility for repairs. No planned maintenance has been carried out on the Tower since 2000.
- 1.3** On 15th March 2002 the Senior Archaeologist commissioned a condition report, to identify works for the consolidation and conservation of the Tower; the report identified costs of approx £95,000 (2002 prices).

2.0 Progress

- 2.1** To date in 2009, the following work has been carried out on the Tower for health and safety reasons;
 - Removal of pigeon droppings and debris
 - Repair front door and new lock fitted.

3.0 Restoration of clock

- 3.1** The mechanical clock in the Tower has not worked for a number of years. Specialist Clock Repairers, H E Weir & Sons of Edinburgh, have now inspected the clock and can confirm that it can be repaired. They would take the mechanism back to Edinburgh for cleaning and repair. They would also supply and fit a strike control unit, which controls the number of blows to the bell, with remote access for BST/GMT changeover. The switch would be located at the foot of the Tower.

Cost: £4,200

4.0 Installation of electricity supply

- 4.1** At present there is no electricity supply in the Tower and the cost of the provision of this including safety lights in the Tower, isolation and electrical protection for the clock and the provision of a hydraulic platform for access to the clock face by the clockmaker.

Cost: £5,500

5.0 Floodlighting of the Tower

- 5.1** The present floodlighting of the Tower is sub-standard, due to the lack of electricity supply and is at present lit from an adjacent lamppost.
- 5.2** To illuminate the Tower properly, it is proposed to install recessed ground mounted uplighters adjacent to each face. These uplighters being recessed and with armoured glass lenses not only offer a very good defence of protection against vandalism but being recessed do not effect the day time appearance of the Tower.
- 5.3** The uplighters will be powered by 70 Watt energy efficient metal halide lamps which will give off a warm white light which at night will complement the red sandstone of the Tower.

Cost: £3,500

6.0 Proposed masonry repairs

- 6.1** As explained in the report from Donald Mackenzie, stone mason, (extract below) some of the stone on the stonework of the Tower is in poor condition and in urgent need of repair.

6.2 Report from D F MacKenzie, Stonemason & Builder

“Cromwell Tower is of a sandstone construction with dressed margins/rubble walls built with a lime mortar. The stonework has been pointed in the past with a cement based mortar which is unsuitable for this type of construction in that it prevents water movement and leads to accelerated decay of the sandstone. There is evidence of vegetable growth to beds and joints.

We would propose removal of the existing pointing with the stonework being repointed using a hydraulic lime based mortar with which we have wide experience. We would also propose to carry out minor indent repairs to the sandstone jambs at the entrance door.

The estimated costs are identified as;

Erect scaffolding; remove existing pointing and dispose; carefully remove vegetation from beds and joints; repairs to door jambs; repoint beds and joints to dressed quoins and jambs; repoint rubble walls; protect and cure; remove scaffolding and tidy site”.

Cost: £17,000

6.3 References from D F MacKenzie

“With reference to the proposed repointing works at Cromwell’s Tower, Inverness using a hydraulic lime based mortar;

Our Company has carried out this type of works on historic and domestic properties throughout the north of Scotland. Some of the higher profile contracts have been Brodie Castle, Wardlaw Mausoleum, The Old Smiddy on the Isle of Canna and Hugh Miller’s Cottage at Cromarty.

We have carried out and are carrying out lime repointing works for many clients including The National Trust for Scotland, The Highland Council mainly through recently retired Conservation Architect John Duncan, The Free Church of Scotland, large main contractors and private clients.

The importance of properly trained and supervised tradesmen to carry out these works cannot be overemphasised as the curing and protection of the works is often neglected allowing cheaper quotes being obtained which may lead to failure of the pointing. All our operatives are fully-trained tradesmen and our apprentices are undergoing full training”.

7.0 Hard Landscaping

7.1 The area requires a metal rail around the front of the building to stop traffic parking. The broken slabs around the Tower will have to be replaced also.

Cost: £10,000

8.0 Best Value

8.1 Due to the specialised nature of the work to be done the Council has used different contractors and no consultants have been used. The contract, with an estimated value of £40,200, if approved, will be monitored by the Ward Manager to ensure Best Value for The Highland Council.

Contractors being used are;

- H E Weir & Sons, Specialist Clock Repairers, Edinburgh,
- D F MacKenzie, Stonemason, Inverness,
- Hydro Board,
- Highland Council Lighting Section, TEC Services

9.0 Resource Implications

9.1 The costs of the project would be met from the ‘Other Properties’ Budget within the Common Good Fund Revenue Budget Feb 09/10 with any over spend being met from General Revenue Balances.

10.0 Recommendation

10.1 The Committee is asked to agree to:

- i. the proposed improvements and
- ii. the Common Good Fund meeting the costs (estimated at £40,200) associated with the remedial repairs highlighted in this report.

Signature:

Designation: City Manager

Date: 19 May 2009

Author/Reference: Jimmy Flint, Ward Manager Central and Millburn

Background Papers: Cromwell Tower Report 2002 (A copy of which can be viewed in the Members’ Lounge)