



Belfast City Council

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| Report to: | Strategic Policy & Resources Committee |
| Subject: | City Hall Major Works Update |
| Date: | 20 June 2008 |
| Reporting Officer: | Gerry Millar, Director of Improvement |
| Contact Officer: | Michael Stanley, Project Manager |

Relevant Background Information

A previous update on the City Hall contract was presented to Committee on 22nd February 2008 and as agreed this is the third quarterly update.

1. Project Information:

Project Start Date: 19th November 2007

Contract Period: Phase 1 Completion Date – 52 weeks (19th November 2008)
Phase 2 Completion Date – 90 weeks (10th August 2009)

Project Budget: £11.9 million

Main Contractor: Graham Construction

Progress to Date:

- Asbestos removal/ encapsulation work is now complete
- Re-roofing work is 60% complete and currently running ahead of programme
- Electrical strip out is progressing and the first fix is in progress
- Strip out of radiators, sprinkler system, heating pipework and boilers is complete and the first fix is ahead of programme
- Plaster repairs have commenced and are on programme
- Redecoration of the Council Chamber and Rotunda area has commenced
- Refurbishment of chandeliers is in progress and chandeliers will be returned by the end of June.

The project is currently on programme and a simplified version of the construction programme is attached at Appendix 1 for information.

Variations:

Members will be aware that the biggest risk to the budget and programme of any project is that of 'changing your mind' – hence it is vital that Committee exercises very strict control over any proposed variations to the specification over and above those that occur through unforeseen circumstances.

Variations approved to date include:

- Removal of all racking in the basement - £16,500 (funded by Facilities Management)
- Relocation of the Emergency Room from the basement to the second floor - £350,000 (funded by Health and Environmental Services Department)

There are no further budget or programme impacts from these variations.

Additional Work Requests:

Facilities Management have requested the following variations which can proceed if funds are made available:

- Replacement of the lightning protection system which does not comply with current standards
- Decoration of all internal window frames
- Repairs to stained glass windows at high level in the Rotunda
- Replacement of pigeon netting/wiring
- Upgrade of the sound system in the three function rooms
- Re-covering bench seats in council chamber
- Refurbishment of gas lights

There is a logic to doing this maintenance work now while the refurbishment is underway. While some of these items had been identified they were not included in the tender specification for budgetary reasons.

The former Lord Mayor Councillor Rodgers on a recent site visit raised a number of issues regarding the contract which the Committee also needs to address. Items raised include the sound system for the Great Hall which is included above.

A more fundamental issue was that of air conditioning. The use of air conditioning in City hall was discounted for a number of reasons:

- (i) Cost – we have asked consultants to provide installation, running, maintenance and replacement costs which have yet not been received although this could easily reach over £2m. There are no current funds

available for this work and such expenditure would have a major impact on other project funding.

- (ii) A major problem is the building itself both in terms of heritage, aesthetics, disruption and the practicality of getting permission for suspended ceilings hiding pipework etc.
- (iii) From a green/environmental perspective air conditioning is an inefficient user of energy and as the City Hall is single glazed this adds considerably to the expense of heating and cooling costs. The new Energy Property Certificate legislation would mean the City Hall would receive a very poor rating should air conditioning be fitted.

A third issue raised by Councillor Rodgers was a smaller item in regard to telephone booths in the Members Common Room which have been removed as the stud partition contained asbestos and also to increase space in the Common Room. Councillor Rodgers would like these reinstated and the Committee view on this sought.

Councillor interest in the project is most welcome and we are happy to provide further site visits. However, to ensure this project comes in on time and budget any suggestions for major changes must come through Committee. Again Committee views are sought on the additional works suggested.

Financial Matters:

The project is currently within budget.

The estimated cost of the variations proposed by Facilities Management is as follows:

- Replacement of the lightning protection system which does not comply with current standards - £170,000
- Decoration of all internal window frames - £21,000
- Repairs to stained glass windows at high level in the Rotunda - £26,000
- Replacement of pigeon netting/wiring - £70,000
- Upgrade of the sound system in the three function rooms - £25,000
- Re-covering bench seats in council chamber - £12,000
- Refurbishment of gas lights - £13,000

Total estimate £337,000 additional

Facilities Management in anticipation of undertaking some of this work have allocated a budget for City Hall maintenance this year. Together with savings from elsewhere in Facilities Management this equates to between £75,000 and £100,000. The Director of Corporate Services has suggested the balance could be made from some as yet unallocated capital receipts.

Issues Arising:

Subject to Committee view it will be important that funds are made available as soon as

possible after detailed costings have been received for the proposed additional work to keep within programme.

Photographs:

The scale of the work going on is now fairly intensive with upwards of 70 men on site.

A series of photographs are included in Appendix 2 for information and to show the extent of disruption. There has also been recent media interest in this project which we will need to respond to post Committee.

2. Future Use

With refurbishment work well under way, it is important that decisions in respect of the future use of the City Hall are taken promptly and various options are set out in a separate paper.

Key Issues

1. It is important that the extent of variations be agreed as soon as possible and that funds are made available to carry out the work.
2. It is imperative that the future use of the City Hall is determined as a matter of urgency. Works are quickly progressing to the stage where alterations / changes in layout will have a major time and cost effect on the project

Resource Implications

The anticipated project expenditure is £12,241,500 for the Major Works contract, based on the accepted tender and approved variations but excluding any of the variations not yet approved.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes this report and determines:

1. The extent of the additional variations to be approved as suggested by Facilities Management and Councillor Rodgers
2. Funding for the recommended variations as suggested in the paper
3. That the future use of the City Hall paper is taken into account in any decisions

Key to Abbreviations

N/A

| Documents Attached |
|--------------------------------|
| Appendix 1 – Updated Programme |
| Appendix 2 – Photographs |

