

## **MAIN HALL ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS: LIGHTING**

### **Issue**

1. At its meeting on 8 October officials made a presentation to the SPCB which:
  - explained a longstanding problem with the lighting in the Main Hall; and
  - set out possible options to address this problem.

### **Background**

2. The SPCB agreed in principle to proceed with plans to improve the lighting in the Main Hall and invited officials – with support from the appointed lighting design expert, Kevan Shaw Lighting Design Ltd - to bring forward more detailed proposals. Officials were also asked to provide further advice on projected budgets and the scope for cost recovery.
3. This paper invites the Corporate Body to confirm its decision to proceed with the improvement works, noting the prospects for cost recovery.

### **The Main Hall**

4. The Main Hall is the principal access route into the Parliament for all members of the public. It is therefore heavily used by all visitors including tour groups, school groups, committee witnesses, constituents visiting MSPs and people taking part in events or viewing exhibitions.
5. When the Parliament was opened in 2004 it was noted that the lighting in the Main Hall fell short of the expectations in the original design brief. Recent improvements have altered and enhanced the way visitors move through the Main Hall. But it remains compromised by inadequate lighting, which is particularly the case for people with access requirements. The current lighting, provided entirely through spotlights, creates ‘pools’ of bright light and makes it difficult for visitors to navigate their way around the space and to view exhibitions or read information about the Parliament. Over the years, feedback from MSPs, visitors with access requirements, as well as building users in general has highlighted concerns about lighting including: variable illuminance, brightness, distribution, glare and direct/indirect light sources.
6. Since we occupied the building, these issues have been addressed with stop gap measures, primarily by way of fitting extra spotlighting. In addition, significant exhibitions in the Main Hall such the World Press Photo and the Great Tapestry, and major events such as the lunch provided at the Microsoft World Leaders Conference, have required the installation of additional, temporary lighting to address the poor light quality.

## Options

7. The Corporate Body was presented with three options:

(i) Do nothing – we could continue as we have done. But this does not address the underlying problem. Neither is it cost free. The current lights are not energy efficient and we have to pay for temporary lighting for some major exhibitions.

It was agreed that the lighting problems needed to be addressed.

(ii) Install a suspended lighting system – (similar to that applied to the SPICe office). This would provide some improvements by achieving consistent light levels but it would conflict with the architectural design of the Main Hall by both obscuring the barrel vaulted ceiling and leaving it unlit.

For that reason it was ruled out.

(iii) Design and install a new lighting system. This would address the lighting inadequacies whilst respecting the architectural design in this principal space within the building. This would be more expensive but it offered significant benefits:

- Improved access for visitors generally and, in particular, for those with visual impairment by providing a consistent and overall higher level of illuminance.
- Greater flexibility and wider scope for exhibitions (and without the need to hire in equipment) – we have been limited to date by the existing lighting constraints.
- Improved signage and visitor information which would improve the flow of visitors.
- Reduced energy use and future maintenance costs.
- Improved working conditions and access at the visitor information desk.

## Potential for income generation

8. The prime motivation for tackling the lighting in the Main Hall is to improve the experience for visitors generally and, in particular, for those with visual impairment. But it also better equips the Main Hall as a space to run larger, commercial events by increasing its attractiveness and flexibility. The Main Hall has two distinct advantages over other spaces in the Parliament. Firstly, its size – it can accommodate lunch or dinner for 300 guests or 450 for a reception. During the Members' Room Pilot there has been some demand for larger event space than is offered in the Members' Room. And secondly, its close proximity to the building's main public entry and exit points makes security relatively straightforward (and therefore less expensive) as visitors would not need to access the central areas of the Holyrood complex.

## Budget and resource implications

9. The estimated maximum cost is £550k for the lighting and installation. A breakdown of the cost estimate is shown at Annex A. As these are estimates for budgeting purposes, this information should not be published until after procurement is complete.

10. This would represent a significant investment in the infrastructure of a high profile public part of the building. The lighting components have an estimated lifespan of 17 years; the joinery work considerably longer. The cost can be met from existing resources and delivered in the current financial year.

11. We believe that the improvements would enable some of this cost to be offset. Assuming 4-6 additional commercial events a year (using the Main Hall when it is not needed to support Parliamentary business), we estimate potential income generation of £20-25k annually. Over 5 years this would produce an income of £100-125k (net present value of approximately £107k) and over 10 years, a potential additional income of £200-250k (net present value of approximately £205k). Given the expected 17 year lifespan of the lighting components, it seems realistic to look to increased income at least over this period.

12. In summary, whilst the prime motivation for the improvements is to help visitors to the Parliament, we believe a positive consequential benefit of a more attractive and flexible space is the potential to generate significant additional income to help offset the cost with greater added flexibility for exhibitions.

### **Equalities Impact Assessment**

13. One of the principal aims of the project is to significantly improve accessibility for visitors and, in particular, people with visual impairments. The Equalities Manager has been consulted on the proposed solution and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. We will work with the Equalities Manager to review feedback from stakeholder groups such as RNIB Scotland following any lighting improvements.

### **Publication Scheme**

14. This paper can be published (excepting for now the annex, which contains commercially sensitive information).

### **Decision**

15. The Corporate Body is invited to confirm the decision it took in principle to proceed with the improvement works at its meeting on 8 October.

### **Next Steps**

16. The detailed designs are being finalised. Contracts for the joinery and other works are in the process of being tendered. The aim is to carry out the works in February during the annual maintenance week when the building is closed to the public. The SPCB will be updated on progress at regular intervals.

## **Facilities, Event, Exhibitions and Visitor Services October 2014**