

The Rockfield Centre



Business Plan Executive Summary

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“Restoration of historic buildings/sites is likely to initiate regeneration of a wider area providing employment and opportunities for volunteering”

DZT Outline Business Case, Town Centre and Waterfront Projects

“Tourism activity cuts across a number of sectors and will bring significant benefits to Argyll and Bute and Scottish economies. In particular, tourism activity links closely with food and drink, built, natural and cultural heritage, the retail sector and recreational activities.”

Argyll and Bute Council's Economic Development Action Plan 2013 -18

“Cultural and creative activities, in particular the arts, have a special appeal to young people, as well as providing a wealth of learning opportunities and skills development for them.”

The proposed Rockfield Cultural Centre, Scoping Report, Jane Robinson

“Oban is the largest town in North Argyll and it plays a major part in the activity of mainland Argyll but also the island communities served by its ferries.”

DZT Outline Business Case, Town Centre and Waterfront Projects

“HIE’s ambitious “for culture” policies recognise the value and part that assets like the (Dunoon) Burgh Hall play in making our region a more attractive place to live, work, study and invest”

HIE policy

1. Executive Summary

1.1 Oban Communities Trust (OCT) was incorporated as a company limited by Guarantee on 1 August 2014 in response to the proposed demolition of the former school building to make way for new social housing. A group of people, passionate about saving the building came together to offer the building a new future.

1.2 The Trust plans to ***create a cultural hub which will operate as a social enterprise celebrating culture and heritage whilst also embracing enterprise and community wellbeing.*** OCT is the preferred bidder to take over the building on an asset transfer basis from Argyll and Bute Council (A&BC). Local people have been widely consulted to determine the best way to do this so that a sustainable plan is put together which will add to Oban's offer by:

- *improving health and wellbeing for local people*
- *providing jobs*
- *encouraging economic regeneration*
- *enhancing the tourism industry*
- *conserving a significant building for community purposes*

1.3 A significant gap has been identified in Oban for cultural and heritage activities to enhance the town's offer to local people and visitors alike. Rockfield School is available and has the potential to deliver a significant base for such an offer right in the centre of Oban and the vision can be realised at little or no cost to A&BC while delivering many outcomes in line with its Community Plan and Single Outcome agreement and Economic Development Plan. The Council has a strong history of working with the community in Oban to deliver services through social enterprises; this would continue this tradition enabling significant investment in the centre of the town at a time when the local authority is facing financial constraints.

1.4 The overall investment is estimated at around £5 million. This would see the eventual restoration of the main building complex to provide high quality exhibition/museum space (accredited) capable of housing national and local collections, a digital media/ white room providing public access to high tech equipment to all in Oban, Lorn and the Isles, studio space for artists and makers, start-up business and social enterprise units with back office support, canteen, art retail and café

style performance and rehearsal space, publicly accessible toilets and car parking all within the town centre of Oban. A phased approach will allow many of these activities and enterprises to be piloted while funding applications for capital work are developed.

- 1.5** The key funders likely to support the project provide funding for the design and project development phases so detailed plans and permissions will be sought at that time. In the meantime however professional advice has been received from architects and surveyors in a lay capacity and outline floor plans for the project have been prepared illustrating the proposed foot prints for different activities. These have been used to project likely costs for the first business plan. A detailed risk assessment has also been prepared. The short timeframe for the production of this business plan and its supporting documentation has not enabled a detailed architectural feasibility study to be undertaken and the issues of the dry rot and water ingress to the main building mean that there are a number of questions around the current actual state of the asset.
- 1.6** Phase I sees the car park managed and run by an experienced management company, the huts tidied up, with toilets and ramps accessible to those with disabilities in place and let to local charities. This phase also sees the community gain access to the main building to clean and decorate it to enable access by potential tenants in phase II.
- 1.7** Phase II sees ramp access to the ground floor of the main building in place, refurbishment of toilets to serve the initial use, the canteen becoming operational, a large exhibition area, a messy workshop, artist's studios and the beginnings of a digital media suite. As demand increases, use of the upper floor can be developed to offer further studio and workshop space. The following plan illustrates projected initial occupation of the area.

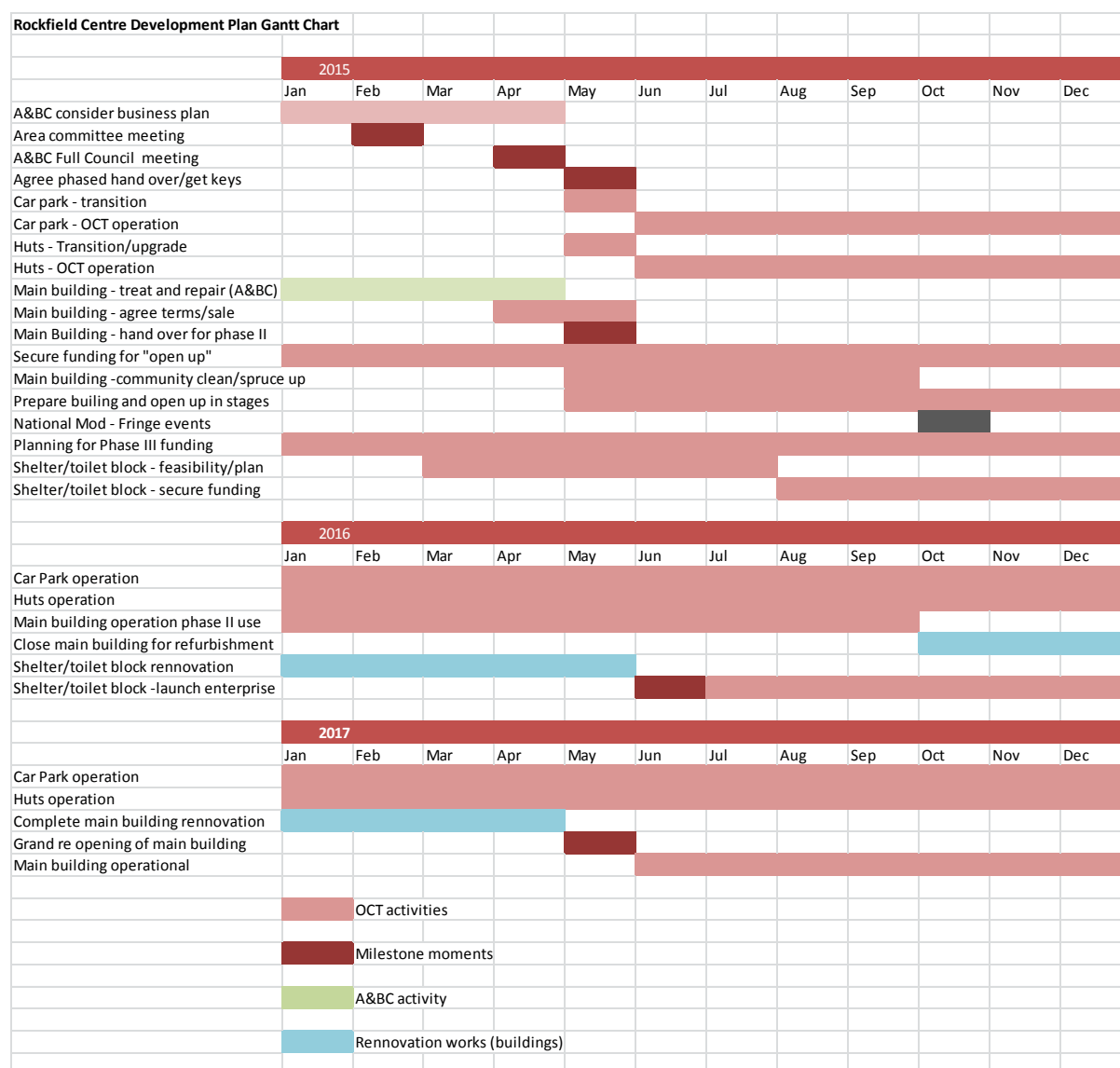


1.8 Phase III will see similar use but in a building significantly refurbished and “kitted out” for a 21st century hub promoting heritage and culture in all its various forms in Oban for local people and visitors alike. It will have accredited status exhibition and museum space together with a fully accessible second floor.



Timescale for Acquisition and Development

1.9 It is understood that the proposal for the acquisition of Rockfield School will go to the Area Committee in February 2015 with ratification at the Full Council meeting in April 2015. The National Mod will take place in Oban in October 2015 and The Rockfield Centre would like to be operational (phase II) by that time so that it can offer Mod Fringe activities and begin to establish a reputation as a tourist destination. If all events go to plan OCT would be opening the refurbished Rockfield Centre in the summer of 2017. The timeline below indicates significant milestones for the various strands of the development. An early and positive decision from A&BC would enable the target date of October 2015 to be achieved.



This timeline is dependent on many factors which have the potential to delay; it may therefore be subject to alteration.

1.10 Funding to deliver The Rockfield Centre will be provided through a matrix of different types of support and at different times of three phases. Phase one sees the establishment of the car park and huts as social enterprise income streams to the Trust. It also sees a significant fund raising campaign to secure £50k in public subscription/donation to tidy up the main building for initial use. £25k of this amount has already been promised to OCT and the New Year will see the launch of a major campaign to bring in the remainder. It is intended that much volunteer labour will be used during the initial phases to refurbish buildings in the short term whilst large scale funders and investors will be approached for the longer term restoration. This extract of the matrix illustrates plans for phases I and II.

Funding Matrix – Rockfield Centre

Phase	Requirement	Possible Source	Budget (if known)	Action Step
Phase I				
Car Park	None Horizon will capitalise	-	-	None
The Huts	Working capital for refurbishments £7,000 per hut	Rent up front for 2 years on one hut (£20K)	£14,000	Secure working capital by donation/subscription
Heritage/ reminiscence project delivery	Project worker and delivery costs inc venue, materials, interpretation	Heritage Lottery Fund (small projects)	£20K???	Prepare and submit application asap
Planning and prep for Phase II	Project management costs, building prep costs (partitions, decorating, heating, electric, plumbing)	Grants, public subscription, community share issue	£50K??	Finalise costs, public appeal, consider share issue
Feasibility study/ Business plan for shelter/toilets (in car park)	Explore and market research options and prepare plan	Awards for All	£10K	Prepare and submit application
Phase II				
Project development/ management staffing	1 project manager @ £24K pa + 20% costs	Robertson Trust	£30K for 2.5 years	
Janitorial staffing	2 x janitorial staff @ £17K pa ¹²	From income??	£ 33,600	
Project development costs	Planning, planning permission, title/ legal transfer prep and costs Phase III business plan	Growing Community Assets Development Funding	£50K	Prepare application during phase I
Digital Media equipment (phase one)	3D printer, laser cutter	Creative Scotland	£20K	

1.11 Cash flow – initial projections based on the car park, huts and main building to phase II show that The Rockfield Centre will break even or even show a modest profit during the first three years of operation. Assuming the remaining £25k funding can be secured, phases one and two already in place to be rolled out. The funding matrix shows initial thinking on how the larger capital requirement of approximately £5m can be secured to deliver phase three. A summary of the income and expenditure can be found below:

Rockfield Centre Income and Expenditure 2015 - 2017			
Income	2015	2016	2017
Refurbishment Fundraising	£ 50,000.00	£ -	£ -
Income from parking	£ 14,100.00	£ 21,050.00	£ 21,050.00
Income from huts rental	£ 14,980.00	£ 20,000.00	£ 20,000.00
Café let fee	£ 6,000.00	£ 11,000.00	£ 8,400.00
Artists studios (6- 10)	£ 6,240.00	£ 12,960.00	£ 6,240.00
Start up spaces (6)	£ 11,600.00	£ 19,600.00	£ 11,600.00
Canteen hire	£ 2,800.00	£ 4,800.00	£ 2,800.00
Community messy room	£ 3,180.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 3,500.00
Practice studio	£ 1,800.00	£ 4,300.00	£ 1,800.00
Exhibition space (hire)	£ 2,400.00	£ 3,600.00	£ 2,400.00
Performance space	£ 1,200.00	£ 3,200.00	£ 1,200.00
Digital Media suite	£ 1,200.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 3,000.00
Room hire to college	£ 2,500.00	£ 6,000.00	£ 3,000.00
Workshops	£ 1,000.00	£ -	£ -
Total	£ 119,000.00	£ 118,510.00	£ 84,990.00
Expenditure			
Car park management fee	£ 6,800.00	£ 10,200.00	£ 10,200.00
Huts refurbishment /toilets	£ 7,000.00	£ -	£ 1,500.00
Building insurance	£ 13,328.00	£ 19,992.00	£ 19,992.00
Heating oil/servicing	£ 5,500.00	£ 7,500.00	£ 7,500.00
Electric	£ 2,250.00	£ 3,450.00	£ 3,050.00
Digital connection	£ 800.00	£ 1,200.00	£ 1,200.00
Telecoms/phones	£ 3,400.00	£ 4,200.00	£ 2,520.00
Repairs	£ 50,000.00	£ 1,250.00	£ 1,250.00
Operations	£ 21,328.00	£ 31,992.00	£ 31,992.00
Total	£ 110,406.00	£ 79,784.00	£ 79,204.00
Income	£ 119,000.00	£ 118,510.00	£ 84,990.00
Expenditure	£ 110,406.00	£ 79,784.00	£ 79,204.00
Cash flow	£ 8,594.00	£ 38,726.00	£ 5,786.00

1.12 Risks – there are risk with any venture and these have been assessed for this project. The main risk is the failure to secure funding to fulfil the refurbishment. Although there are no guarantees this can be mitigated by good planning, thorough research and sound advice.

Good governance and sound decision making are further risks, which can be reduced by clear vision, good practices and consultation. The success of the project does NOT hinge on securing a multi-million pound lottery bid as the building is good to go with the more modest refurbishment proposed in phases one/two – a lift to access the upper floors is necessary in the longer term, but most other issues can be worked around.

1.13 Conclusion – OCT is confident this plan demonstrates a viable and deliverable method for bringing Rockfield School into community ownership and developing a cultural and heritage hub in partnership with a range of local and national partners. Significant support has been garnered over the last three months and there is a growing momentum locally to see the redevelopment vision realised.

OCT/BusPlan/ExecSum/SM/7Jan15