

Chambers Institution Trust: Update report to PCC 12/03/26

While formal Planning Permission and Listed Building Consents for Phase 1 have yet to be posted on the planning portal, no concerns have been voiced by members of the public or by statutory consultees, and Peebles Civic Society has confirmed its full support for the proposals. Historic Environment Scotland has confirmed that it is supportive of the scheme overall, commenting that while the proposals would result in some adverse impacts to the A listed building, these are considered to be offset by the wider positive benefits of improved circulation, accessibility and continued viable use of the building as a public facility. HES has recommended that any historic features of significance that will be hidden behind new construction should be retained in place wherever possible and recorded prior to commencement of the works.

The Phase 1 project is now progressing through the next stage of detailed design development (RIBA Stage 4) with a target date of 28th April, to include the first stage Building Warrant application for technical approval. The projected date for commencement of the main contract works is still November of this year, but the forecast completion date has been revised to 14th January 2028, with the aim to complete earlier if possible.

As usefully reported in the Peeblean this week, preparations are being completed for the necessary decanting of tenants and services to temporary accommodation for the duration of the alteration and refurbishment works, and all decant accommodation has now been secured ready for the move, which is planned for the beginning of April. The SBC Contact Centre however is to move permanently to Rosetta Road.

Once the Phase 1 area of the building has been vacated, a package of enabling works is to be carried out in advance of the main works, to include opening up and investigative work, trial pits to enable structural design of the lift shaft foundations, and removal of the existing lift.

The attached copy of the most recent progress report issued by the Project Board provides more detail on the above, and confirms that no abnormal risks to progress are anticipated.

The Phase 2 feasibility study and business plan development is now approaching completion, and discussions are turning to developing presentation information for purposes of the next stage of public consultations. An open day had been planned for this month as mentioned at our last meeting, but this is now postponed to a later date to be confirmed, to allow more time to complete agreed additional work.

After more than 6 months since the application was submitted, we have finally received confirmation from OSCR that the Friends of the Chambers Institution is now a registered Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Discussions will now be held to agree a Memorandum of Understanding with the Chambers Institution Trust on the terms of reference, the most appropriate form of governance, and how we will work together towards common goals. One of the first objectives of the new organisation will be to continue fundraising actions for Phase 1 match funding and thereafter the Phase 2 development plans.

Anyone resident in Tweeddale will be eligible to become a member of the Friends of the Chambers Institution, and there will be vacancies for new charity trustees to join the board from the membership in due course. Anyone interested in applying should contact myself or Lorna McCullough at Borders Community Action.

Sam Coe



**Chambers Institution Levelling Up Fund Project
High-Level Report for Sharing**

Project Overview

- Reporting Period: February 2026 (3/2/26 - 26/2/26)
- Project Stage: RIBA Stage 4
- Planning application submitted December 2025
- Total Budget: £4,662,000 (£4,195,800 LUF, £466,200 CIT Fundraising)

Progress & Activities

RIBA Stage 3 approved on 15 December 2025

- Design team progressing with RIBA Stage 4 design, currently on programme to conclude by 28 April 2026 in line with the master project programme.
- Master project programme being updated based on recent procurement discussion and to be shared in due course.
- Construction currently programmed to commence on 14 December 2026 and due to conclude 14 January 2028. TTPM working to better this date as far as possible with the aim to conclude construction in 2027.
- Jensen Huges formally appointed by TTPM to deliver fire engineering services a RIBA Stage 4.
- Preparation of decant locations ongoing and project team and tenants working towards a full building decant at the beginning of April.
- SBC procurement confirmed it is acceptable to direct award the enabling works package to SBContracts with no requirement to formally tender.
- SBC advised TTPM no requirement outlined in the LUF agreement to tender the works and SBContracts will be appointed on this basis.
- Decision made to postpone opening up the vault space to when enabling works being carried out to minimise disruption to the tenants.
- Lift trial pits will also be incorporated into the enabling works opening up package of works.
- Project RFI tracker has been developed and shared with SBC/Live Borders for comment.
- Enabling works scope being developed by TTPM and design team to allow SBContracts to undertake the required works.
- Meeting held with TTPM, TTCM and SBC procurement to agree the approach for tendering mains work package.
- 4 removal firms due to visit site between W/C 2nd March and W/C 9th March 2026 to provide a price for removal works. These quotes will be shared with SBC for consideration ahead of appointing a removal company.
- Building warrant to be submitted in two stages. Stage 1 will include all information with the exception of CDP items that require SER certification. Stage 1 planned to be submitted to building standards on 2nd April 2026.
- Stage 2 date to be confirmed following appointment of the contractor for main works.
- Awaiting confirmation from building standards on the requirement for warrant to remove the existing lift as part of the enabling works package.
- Project team working on comms to ensure all communicated are aligned and consistent.
- Current forecast completion date is 14 January 2028. A full programme review is currently being undertaken and TTPM are aiming to better this completion date as far as possible.



Funded by UK Government

- Gap match funding discussion ongoing.

Programme

- Current forecast completion: **14 January 2028**
- Key milestones:
 - Stage 3 approved: **4 December 2025.**
 - Decant start: **April 2026.**
 - Main works start: **November 2026.**

Key Achievements

- Stage 3 coordinated design completed.
- Fire Engineer approved.
- Decant accommodation secured for all tenants.
- RIBA Stage 4 design stage on programme to conclude 28 April 2026.

Key Issues

- Ensure decant dates go as planned.
- Removal dates dependant on availability of removal companies
- Match funding to be found and secured.

Risk & Change Management

- Top risks:
 - Statutory consent delays.
 - Decant complexities.
 - Historic building constraints.
 - Fire engineering requirements.
- Risk register updated; mitigation strategies in place.
- Change control procedure implemented for scope and cost adjustments.

Financial Overview

- Costs were reviewed with the team and remain within budget.