

# Council sets deadline for Royal High

✘ The Council's Finance Committee agreed this morning to allow the developer DHP until the end of December to enter into a legal agreement to develop the former Royal High School building on Calton Hill. If the agreement is not signed off by Hogmanay, then the landmark building will be remarketed, and a new developer will be sought.

Some murmurings at this morning's meeting demonstrated that the council is aware of the involvement of this company in other significant sites in the city, namely the Old Odeon cinema. The planning officer was asked to confirm that checks would be made as to the company's standing during the due diligence process. It was stated that the company had a well-known firm of architects behind the scheme at the moment.

The legal agreement would cover the terms of the 125 year lease which the council plans to grant to the company. The idea is that the rent will be minimal, but there would be an up front payment made to the council for the benefit of using the high-profile site.

Even if the agreement is signed by December 2011, councillors were advised that it is unlikely that the hotel would be completed before late 2014. Councillor Tom Buchanan commented on the length of time that this project has been under discussion, and asked if there were any plans available as yet. He was told that there were provisional plans, but the whole scheme was in any case dependent on planning permission and listed building consent.

DHP won a competition in 2010 to turn the site into a 120 bed luxury hotel with an array of restaurants and leisure facilities.

