

# Corsham Mansion House and Library

Report to Wiltshire Council CCAC Committee  
for the purchase and repurposing of a Community Asset

JULY 2011

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## 1.0 Introduction

*“Hadston is a positive and influential company, focused on creating sustainable digital and social communities. We lead in technology, conservation and innovation with a vision to create a lasting legacy that improves people lives. We act with integrity and strive to be socially and environmentally responsible, whilst demonstrating healthy corporate citizenship.”*

Our team have been involved in creating sustainable communities for over a quarter of a century. We stake our involvement from conception to delivery, ensuring that we are involved in the key decision making process through to the delivery of the final development.

Our projects become smart, green and deliver quantifiable value for healthier cohesive communities. We always work towards excellence and a holistic alignment whether the community is social or economic and we operate alongside specialised partners who share a common vision.

Over the last 100 years we have seen the world transform itself from a light industrial society to a technological homeland with a superhighway of digital information. Hadston seeks to operate in the forefront of this transformation embracing the development of new and innovative solutions to modern life, whilst protecting and enhancing our heritage.

Hadston works in the following sectors ;

Residential, Commercial, Education, Arts and Entertainment, Community Services and Transport, Sustainable land use, Sports and Leisure, Hospitality and Government.

## 2.0 Our Team

The Hadston development team have been involved in community development projects for over 25 years including schemes ranging from small, community village projects, where we act as a catalyst to bring developments forward and enhance community facilities, to new village settlements like Chickerell in Dorset which included many new homes, a new woodland, shops, community facilities and communal spaces, lakes and a public house.

The smaller schemes typically consist of multi ownership or Local Authority Partnerships to bring property or land forward to disposal or joint venture schemes. Hadston is a builder of communities, not just real estate, whereby we stake our involvement from the conception stage through to the final delivery. This ensures a constant and continuous participation with both the public and private sectors in the key decision processes, adding better value for the end community.

Our specialist partners are all experts in their field and we have worked in many public sector partnerships on community enhancement schemes as part of regenerating redundant public buildings and land. With this experience we are familiar with the public sector process and governance and are used to working in a collaborative environment.

### **3.0 Corsham – A Modern Community**

Corsham is a thriving town within a community area that has seen a great deal of positive change in the last five years. With the more recent housing developments across the town, the population has increased by around 20% since 2005.

The Ministry of Defence, after many years of uncertainty, has committed to invest £650M in Corsham over the next 25 years, starting with the redevelopment of Basil Hill as the hub for all UK military communications globally. This has focused the activity of the defence establishment resulting in associated development contracts in excess of £10 Billion.

After 24 years, Bath Spa University has returned to Corsham Court, which provides the basis for a significant academic and learning dimension to the Town, concentrated on Post-graduate Arts and Humanities. Corsham can now claim to be the only University town in Wiltshire.

Wiltshire Council have chosen Corsham to pilot the development of Community Campuses across the whole of Wiltshire which will see a new Library, Youth and Community facilities as well as a refurbished Leisure Centre.

Corsham benefits from an ambitious Town Council and the commitment of a great many organisations and groups across the Community area committed to the Arts, Music, Sustainable Energy, the Environment, Transport and the Corsham community as a whole.

## 4.0 Corsham Mansion House and Library

Corsham Mansion house is situated in the heart of the town and consists of a Grade 2 listed Mansion House with associated buildings and a more recent library building on a separate but adjacent site. The Mansion House is an important historical site, in a prominent position at the western end of Corsham High Street.

The Mansion House has been used as a Youth and Community Centre and is now likely to become surplus as it will be superseded by the new Community Campus development in Corsham. It is likely that any commercial purchaser would look to develop the site into a residential scheme and therefore all community use of these sites would come to an end.

This is part of a strategic development program of 18 similar campus development sites across Wiltshire. This program looks to consolidate the council's operational community facilities into campus areas and dispose of surplus buildings in favor of potentially lower carbon and more efficient buildings.

The scheme will empower local people to directly influence the delivery and improvement of their community. It will also promote social inclusion, sustainable management frameworks and create a central platform for the voluntary and community sector in Wiltshire.

## 5.0 The Proposal

Our proposal is to ensure the same, open market capital receipt for the Council but retain these buildings in community use as part of a wider private and public community vision for Corsham. The proposal would utilise all of the existing buildings as one site and the use would be as follows:

- **Educational floor space utilised by Bath Spa University**
- **Supplemental educational space available for Corsham Schools**
- **Some student residential accommodation for short stay post graduate students**
- **A new location for the Corsham Local information centre**
- **A new community event booking and information point**
- **Hospitality facilities to facilitate interaction between community and users**
- **The creation of a new community/student led digital broadcast facility**
- **An electric vehicle charging point as part of a local transport initiative**

The other parts of the Mansion House site would contain community points of contact to enhance the new community campus and provide a link to the town centre for event ticketing and community information. This would collaborate with existing community bodies including, Pound Arts, Tourist Information, The Heritage Centre, The Civic Society and The Chamber of Commerce.

The current library building would receive a contemporary facelift and would become a new digital resource for Corsham called 'DIGITAL CORSHAM'. This will house a new community broadcast, programming and content facility whereby digital content could be made and broadcast via the internet. This would be student led and open for use by the town.

We have the ability to be agile both in the terms and timing of the purchase and to make the transition and migration to the new community campus as smooth as possible by way of a post sale, licenced occupancy for the council and current occupying community bodies at the Mansion House.

**In summary, we will commit to the following:**

- **Full market value reflecting an open market sale**
- **A license to occupy for the Council until the completion of the new Community Campus**

This exciting scheme will make Corsham an exemplar for the current worldwide digital transformation which is taking place. It embraces local artistic talent resident in the town, in the local schools and the University and puts Corsham at the forefront of the technological homeland, which is being formed as part of our modern society.

We hope that Wiltshire Council feel able to support the scheme as an alternative to a commercial development disposal whereby this historic and prominent community asset will be retained and enhanced into a modern and dynamic community facility, which will serve the town into the future.

**Statement of support from Bath Spa University.**

*“Bath Spa University is proud to be part of Corsham and supports the proposed scheme to repurpose the Mansion House, a longstanding community asset situated in the centre of the town. We recognize that once the sensitive development is completed the historic buildings and the new facilities will make a significant contribution to the Town and Wiltshire as a whole. The proposed scheme compliments the work of the University in providing new opportunities for many technology-based arts and cultural activities in our specialist field of the cultural industries and the knowledge economy.*

*We are a local employer and support full time and part time jobs in the town which, combined with our student population and visitors contributes significantly to the overall well being of the local economy”.*



**Appendix 1      Confidentiality Agreement**

Hadston are willing to enter into a confidentiality agreement with Wiltshire Council in respect of the sale of the Mansion House and Library subject to the Council resolution to treat with Hadston.

**Appendix 2      Proposed Terms**

Proposed terms and the mechanism for the purchase will be provided for consideration in line with this document, following completion of the confidentiality agreement.