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# Report

**Report subject :** The Future Use of the Guildhall

**Report to :** The Cabinet

**Date :** Wednesday 28 February 2007

**Author :** Robin Townsend – Head of Community Initiatives Unit and Phill Smith, General Manager, Civic and Entertainment Facilities

**Cabinet Member for Community and Housing:** Councillor John Cole-Morgan

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**1. Report Summary:**

Cabinet is requested to consider proposals for the next steps in determining the future of the Guildhall once the Magistrates vacate the building.

**2. Introduction and Background:**

- 2.1. The Magistrates occupy in excess of 70% of the floor space in the Guildhall and make a financial contribution in the region of £ 140,000 p.a. by way of rent and service charge.
- 2.2. Members will be aware that the Magistrates Court Service confirmed their intention to re-locate to a new combined Courthouse on Wilton Road, Salisbury a number of years ago. The timescales associated with this move continue to shift, however the most recent advice received from the Council's agent is that the Magistrates Court Service has requested that the lease to use the Guildhall be extended until 2010, exercisable at anytime with six months notice.
- 2.3. In February 2004 the Cabinet approved an Outline Consultation Brief, (appendix 1) for the future use and development of the Guildhall. The brief defined the legal, property and financial criteria upon which the Council would assess potential future uses put forward as part of the consultation exercise.
- 2.4. It was considered important that the Council should encourage a full and wide consultation with stakeholders and community interests on the future use of the Guildhall and needed to seek ideas and outline proposals from individuals, community groups, civic societies, other public bodies and the private sector. The Council's strong preference at the time was to retain the ownership of the building. It did state, however, that it would consider proposals for licensing all or parts of the building for suitable purposes or entering into a short-term lease with an operator for a maximum of 25 years. It would also consider a longer-term lease or sale if this were to another appropriate public or charitable body.



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- 2.5. The intention was that the Council could consider these proposals and ideas in the autumn of 2004, with a view to setting a clear path and direction for the future of the building once the Magistrates move out.
- 2.6. In November 2004, the Cabinet considered the options put forward as part of the public consultation exercise (appendix 2). It was at this meeting that Cabinet agreed that any long term proposals for the future use of the Guildhall be deferred and considered as part of the Vision for the future of Salisbury.

### **3. The Vision for Salisbury:**

- 3.1 Salisbury Vision Area Development Framework is nearing completion and in terms of a development strategy for the Guildhall the consultant is recommending that the critical path should be as follows:
  - The Council needs to review the future use of the building
  - Appoint a Building Consultant to prepare a 10 year building maintenance property programme and an annual budget for future repairs and maintenance
  - Appoint a Heritage Architect to procure planning permission and listed Building Consent for the improvement works
  - Appoint Agents to act for Salisbury District council to explore demand for the building in the market place.
- 3.2 The Vision Project Board has taken steps to establish a sub-group that will take the lead on developing a robust and fully resourced project plan for the Guildhall.

### **4. Issues for consideration:**

- 4.1 The key piece advice from the consultants who are developing the Salisbury Vision is that the Council should undertake some form of open market testing, to establish whether there is any demand for all or part use of the building. It would be advisable to provide a very open brief so as not to fetter interest and creativity of use. The objective is to provide the Council with as much information as possible and thus enable Members to make an informed decision regarding the future of the property.
- 4.2 Any interest generated would then be examined to assess if it is an appropriate and sustainable City Centre use and considered alongside other potential uses for the property. This is consistent with the Council's Corporate Asset objectives that require a detailed options appraisal to be undertaken to enable Members to make an informed decision regarding the future use of any asset.
- 4.3 In an earlier draft of the Salisbury Vision Area Development Framework a more radical solution was put forward for Guildhall, comprising a new, possibly glass, extension. The thinking behind this suggestion was that it would make the property more viable and attractive to the market and, depending on the design, could make a dramatic contribution to the upgrading of both the Guildhall Square and Market Square. In light of this, the Cabinet may wish to include the Guildhall Square in the exercise referred in 4.1 above.
- 4.4 The property does require some remedial work, external stonework is in need of restoration and internal features require refurbishment. It has also been established by 'Radley House Partnership' that, to satisfy the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), the existing entrance will not be suitable as the principle entrance. If the building is to be made accessible to all then the internal levels and circulation of the building will have to be addressed.
- 4.5 The Magistrates Court Service has requested that the lease to use the Guildhall be extended until 2010, exercisable at anytime with six months notice. Negotiations are already underway to reach an amicable agreement and it would be in the best interests of the Council to ensure that it secures the best possible terms with regard to minimum guaranteed period of the lease and any notice period agreed.

### **4. Recommendations:**

#### **It is recommended that:**

1. The Council's Agent is appointed to act for the Council to explore the demand for the building in the marketplace, and seek expressions of interest by way of a very open brief so as not to fetter interest and creativity of use.
2. Cabinet determines whether the Guildhall Square should be included in the brief.

3. Legal and Property Services work with Housing Services to prepare a 10 year building maintenance property programme and an annual budget for future repairs and maintenance.

**5. Background Papers:**

Radley House Partnership Feasibility Study  
Sykes Feasibility Study 2000  
Draft Salisbury Vision Area Development Framework

**6. Implications:**

**Financial:** The financial impact associated with the departure of the Magistrates Court Service will result in a reduction in income of approximately £140K per annum, so in terms of the MTFS alone it is vital that consideration is given to the future of the venue. It is anticipated that the costs associated with this work can be resourced from within existing budgets.

**Legal:** With any change of use the Council will need to ensure that the property fully complies with DDA Legislation. As long as the Council continues to own the building it will need to ensure that both the interior and exterior of the building is fully maintained which will definitely necessitate remedial work being undertaken to the external fascias.

In terms of Risks, the Council is entirely in the hands of the Magistrates Courts Services in terms of timescales regarding their departure. The Council has already committed considerable resources in determining a future use of the building and there is no guarantee that the Courts will depart by 2010, however the council can only act on the best advice received at the time

<b>Human Rights</b>	: None
<b>Personnel</b>	: None at this stage
<b>Community Safety</b>	: None at this stage
<b>Environmental</b>	: None at this stage
<b>ICT</b>	: None at this stage
<b>Wards Affected</b>	: City Wards

### Property Criteria for the future use of the Guildhall

#### Scope

Views and outline proposals for the future use are sought for the whole of the Guildhall and surrounding areas (see attached plan) subject to any limitations as set out in the following sections. Although the Market Square Car Park is excluded from the brief the Council may consider proposals that do not lessen the overall revenue the Council can reasonably expect from Car Parking, where they are integral to the overall proposals for the Guildhall itself. The Market Square is also a venue for the twice-weekly Charter market and is used to hold other events and markets throughout the year. Any proposals for the Guildhall which include the Market Square would need to ensure that this use is maintained.

#### Ownership

The Guildhall is a significant public and civic building. The Council's strong preference will be to retain the ownership of the building. It will consider proposals for licensing all or parts of the building for suitable purposes or entering into a short-term lease with an operator to a maximum of 25 years. The Council may consider a longer-term lease or sale if this was to another appropriate public or charitable body.

#### Investment and Return

It is recognised that modernising the Guildhall to meet full public accessibility standards may require a significant investment of Capital. Any Capital investment required by the Council will be considered within the context of our existing Capital Strategy, which supports the following criteria:

- To maximise capital resources to meet Council priorities
- To maximise "Invest to Save" opportunities which reduce dependency on revenue
- To work in partnership with other bodies on capital projects to minimise the impact on the Council's financial position
- To grant aid external organisations which deliver the Council's priorities
- To maintain the Council's assets and ensure the health and safety of the public and staff
- To ensure the capital programme is informed by the outcomes of Best Value reviews, and other developments

The Council has very limited revenue finances and will therefore prefer to see proposals that match or exceed the current contribution made by the exiting tenants (£138000). However, it is recognised that proposals that meet the financial criteria may by their very nature be more commercial and not fit in with other criteria within the brief. Proposals that meet all the council's criteria but limit the losses of current rental income generated will be given priority consideration. Under no circumstances will the Council be able to consider proposals that have additional revenue costs.

#### Heritage and Conservation

The eighteenth century Guildhall is an important historic building within the city of Salisbury (brief history attached). The building is Grade II\* listed building and located within a designated Conservation Area. Any proposals should fully respect the history and status of the building and be in keeping with its local status and setting. Any proposals will need to be considered by the Council's conservation officer and gain approval from English Heritage before being permitted to proceed (outline guidance attached).

#### Accessibility

The necessity to satisfy the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), has established that the existing entrance to the building is no longer suitable as the principle

entrance. If the building is to be open to the public then the internal levels and circulation of the building have to be addressed.

The building currently has a complicated internal layout with numerous circulation routes brought about by the triple circulation requirement for courtrooms. This existing layout is further complicated by the arrangement of the building on a variety of levels. The newer west wing to the building housing the cells is currently arranged approximately 1200mm below the internal floor level to the main entrance foyer. This will need to be addressed to make the building more user friendly.

Within the current circulation routes throughout the building, a disabled access is currently provided at the rear of the building, shared by both staff and public. This entrance is currently unsatisfactory as a main entrance and therefore any future proposals should improve or replace this existing facility. There is however an inherent problem with the building in terms of access to the main elevation.

As a consequence of the principal rooms being raised above ground level (the 'piano noble'), the approach from the Market Square is via six stone steps to the portico and a further seven steps located immediately within the entrance to foyer. Overall, this raises the floor level approximately 1500mm above existing ground level.

#### Existing Users

In addition to any considerations with respect to the status of the building, it has been identified that it would be desirable to retain a number of the existing uses including:

- Banqueting Hall, and associated catering facilities
- Tourist Information Office
- City Charter Trustees and City mayoral function

These hired rooms are regularly utilised for numerous functions and offer attractive venue within the city centre for a multiplicity of uses.

The Council would prefer that the proposed new use for the building incorporates these spaces and, if possible, improves upon their operational and financial success. However, it is recognised that this may not be possible in all proposals. If it is proposed to displace any of the existing uses, alternative arrangements should be suggested.

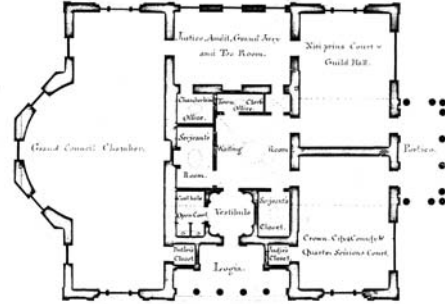
#### Deliverability

Any proposals should be realistic and achievable within reasonable timescales. Any proposal considered to be worth pursuing will be subject to a risk assessment on its deliverability

## Outline History

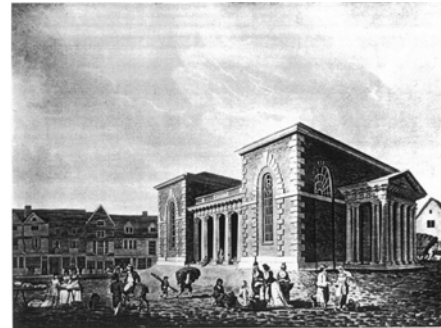
The eighteenth century Guildhall is an important historic building within the city of Salisbury. It is currently the fourth civic building to grace the site within the Market Square, with previous buildings including the city gaol and the Council House.

Designed by Sir Robert Taylor (1714-1788), the renown Palladian architect of the Bank of England, construction of the new Guildhall commenced in 1788 and was completed after his death by his pupil, William Pilkington. The building was originally designed as an imposing two storey structure, housing the Grand Council Chamber, and the Crown, City and County Courts. Its civic importance being emphasised through the architectural treatment by the use of a piano nobile, with the principle floor being raised above ground level.



In 1829 the building was adapted and enlarged by Thomas Hopper (1776 - 1856), who rebuilt the north portico to incorporate an additional storey within the central 'bay' of the building.

In 1889 the building was once again extended with a new wing to the west elevation, being constructed in place of the existing secondary portico, to provide a number of new rooms and prison cells. A few years later 1896-7, the building was extensively reordered and refurbished internally.



Through all of these alterations, undertaken in order to respond to the changing needs of the city, the quality of the building was maintained and enhanced, befitting of its importance and prominent location on the edge of the Market Square.

In 1991 a major refurbishment project was undertaken, mainly to the interior, to reinstate the feeling of elegance and grandeur to the building. These works have ensured that the building successfully continued as a venue for a wide variety of uses and functions, both civic and private, the latter of which brings in an additional income for Salisbury District Council.



The building is Grade II\* listed building and located within a designated Conservation Area.

## THE EXISTING BUILDING – An Analysis of the Design Constraints

The existing building and its location within the centre of the city have raised a number of constraints which will have may effect proposals. These constraints vary from the physical layout of the building to the subjective comments of English Heritage and can be described as follows:

## The Historic Building

The Grade II\* status of the building, and thereby the inevitable requirement to retain features of historic and architectural importance, in whole or in part, significantly governs the potential for reordering to achieve a building flexible enough to satisfy changed uses.

In addition, the inherent form and scale of a court building, which by their nature contain large rooms with complex internal circulation, will influence any appropriate design solution.

Nationally, it is recognised that in order for historic buildings to remain viable in the future, some appropriate alterations are inevitable. It is essential that historic buildings do not become redundant as a consequence of a necessary change of use. Current historic building legislation and policy guidance provides some flexibility, and will allow appropriate and sensitive modification to achieve this end.

For the purposes of this initial consultation exercise we have made a basic analysis, and through preliminary consultation with English Heritage, the principle elements of the Guildhall should be taken into account when considering possible proposals.

We would cite these as:

- **Generally** - to retain a sense of historical development of the building and its former use. It is important that any proposal respects this development, and is appropriate in the context of a former court building.
- Alteration of the **external elevations** should be kept to a minimum. In particular, the treatment of any new entrance, necessary to achieve appropriate public access, will need careful detailing.
- To enhance any proposal there should be 'cohesion' between the internal and **external spaces**, which should read in conjunction with the building. The hard and soft landscaping should be carefully looked at to ensure the building retains the external importance of a civic building, appropriate to its setting.
- **The principal spaces** within the building should, therefore, be discernible in the final design. It may be necessary to link these principal spaces to neighbouring rooms in a different way, but each major space in the conversion should, as a rule, be identifiable in order that references to the original use can be made. For this reason the plan form of the building should be maintained and creation of open plan spaces, through removal of dividing walls, should be kept to a minimum.
- In circumstances where **inappropriate alteration in the past** has occurred, the opportunity may exist to restore the architecture of space if this can be achieved for the benefit of a scheme.
- **The cells** - The originality of the Victorian cells would be desirable to retain although, some adaptation of the existing cells could be considered in part. The context of the cells, inextricably linked to the building's use as a courthouse, are important historical features.

It may therefore be appropriate to retain at least one range of cells (and perhaps the circulation route to the courtroom). It may be possible to undertake limited sympathetic alteration of the retained cells if an appropriate new use is identified.

- **Crown Court** (and directly associated rooms) is acknowledged as the most likely area able to accommodate significant alteration.
  - **Horizontal subdivision** of the room, to provide an additional floor, would not be a preferred option for reasons of maintaining the architectural proportions.

- In addition, **the balcony**, a Georgian architectural element would desirable to retain. The later corridor extension to the east wall is considered less important.
- It is accepted that the courtroom **floor levels** would need to be rationalised as part of any scheme
- It would be desirable to incorporate fine **joinery fittings**, such as the judges' bench, into a scheme if appropriate.
- Principle areas identified as being **not appropriate for alteration** include Entrance Hall, The Oak Court and Banqueting Hall.

The above notes are intended to be an overview of the recommended design strategy, and not prescriptive.

Obviously each proposal needs to be reviewed on its merits, and an acceptable level of intervention established for each.

The outcome of the final design solution may, therefore, be unable to satisfy all the requirements above and it may be possible to justify more extensive alteration.



# REPORT

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**Cllr Mrs Warrander : Cabinet Member for Resources**

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## **FUTURE USE OF GUILDHALL - CONSULTATION**

### **1. Matters for Consideration:**

Cabinet is requested to approve the Outline Consultation Brief (Appendix 1) for the future use and development of The Guildhall.

### **2. Introduction and Background:**

The current use of The Guildhall is shared between the Council (Tourist Information Centre, events and conference facilities) City Charter Trustees and the Magistrates' Court.

The Magistrates have recently confirmed their intention to vacate The Guildhall and move to purpose built accommodation in Wilton Road. Their move to Wilton Road is planned for the financial year 2006/7. The relocation of the Magistrates Courts is significant both in terms of the financial impact upon the Council and in terms of additional space available for potential new uses.

The attached Brief is not a discussion paper on potential uses, but merely an attempt to define the legal, property and financial criteria upon which the Council can assess potential future use of the building that may be proposed during the consultation period.

### **3. Consultation Approach:**

The Guildhall is an important civic building not only for the city, but for the whole district. Its future use has prompted much discussion and debate since the Magistrates first identified that they would be seeking alternative accommodation. The future use of the building has been subject to two previous feasibility studies, the first of which was the Sykes study in 2000 and more recently whether The Guildhall could be used as a Customer Contact Centre.

It is considered important that the Council should encourage a full and wide consultation within its communities on its future use and welcome ideas and outline proposals from individuals, community groups, civic societies, other public bodies and the private sector.

It is considered that a period of three months be allowed for consultation culminating in a public meeting and presentation of proposals at The Guildhall in July. Consideration of these proposals and ideas can then be made by the Council in the autumn with a view to setting a clear path and direction for the future of The Guildhall for when the Magistrates move out.

#### 4. Recommendations:

Members of the Cabinet are requested to:-

- (a) Note the contents of the report and Appendix I;
- (b) Approve the criteria as set out in Appendix I;
- (c) Authorise officers to prepare public consultation material for publication locally and in appropriate property media;
- (d) Consult with the City Area Committee with regard to the wording of the Consultation Brief in respect of protecting existing City Charter Trustees' uses.

#### 5. Background Papers:

Sykes Feasibility Study 2000.  
Radley House Partnership Feasibility Study.

#### 6. Implications:

- **Financial:** The long term financial implications will be dependent upon the proposals considered by the Council. It will cost up to £5,000 to prepare material and publicity for the consultation exercise to be met from the existing programme.
- **Legal** : None
- **Human Rights** : None
- **Personnel** : None
- **Community Safety** : None
- **Environmental** : None
- **Ward(s) Affected** : City wards
- **Consultation Undertaken:** Included within report

# REPORT

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**Councillor Warrander : Cabinet Member for Resources**

## GUILDHALL CONSULTATION EXERCISE

### 1. Matters for consideration:

Cabinet is requested to consider the options put forward as part of the public consultation exercise for the future of the Guildhall once the Magistrates vacate the building.

### 2. Introduction and Background:

- The Magistrates will be re-locating to the proposed new combined Courthouse on Wilton Road, Salisbury and it is currently anticipated that they will be leaving the Guildhall during 2007.
- The Magistrates occupy in excess of 70% of the floor space in the Guildhall and make a financial contribution in the region of £140,000 pa by way of rent and service charge.
- Wiltshire County Council are currently responsible for the provision of accommodation for the Magistrates, however this responsibility will transfer to the Department for Constitutional Affairs on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005.
- The Grade II\* status of the building and thereby the inevitable requirement to retain features of historic and architectural importance.
- The necessity to satisfy the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. If the building is to be made accessible to all then the internal levels and circulation within the building will have to be addressed.
- The building currently has a complicated internal layout with numerous circulation routes and this existing layout is further complicated by the arrangement of the building on a variety of levels.
- On the 22<sup>nd</sup> September a Public Meeting was held at the Guildhall to receive ideas and suggestions for both the short term and long-term uses of the Guildhall, the Guildhall Square and the Market Place. Other ideas have continued to come forward since the meeting.
- There was a good deal of commonality in the proposals which were being put forward and they included:-

<p><b><u>Public Amenities</u></b> Meeting Rooms, Education and Leisure Uses, Museum/Art Gallery/Exhibitions/Theatre, Salisbury Festival, Police Office, Charitable Organisations, Multi-purpose venue</p>	<p><b><u>Civic and Democratic Facilities</u></b> Mayors Office/Charter Trustees/Civic Functions, Display the Charters/Silver, Heritage Centre, Council Chamber, CAB Offices, Relocation of the War Memorial to a more dignified setting</p>
<p><b><u>Tourism Promotion</u></b> Focal point for visitors to Salisbury, Expand/relocate TIC, Showcase for local produce/trades/attractions, Left luggage, Guided tours/Mock trials, Tea Rooms /Bistro/Catering, "Discover Salisbury" relocated from the Medieval Hall, Coach drop off point in the Guildhall Square</p>	<p><b><u>Conferences and Weddings</u></b> Medium size conference, Civil weddings, Receptions in the Banqueting Hall</p>

**3. Next Steps and Timetable:**

- Formalise the Magistrates occupation of the Guildhall when this responsibility transfers to the Department of Constitutional Affairs in April 2005.
- Investigate those proposed uses which can be implemented whilst the Magistrates remain in occupation, assess the financial viability of such proposals and report again by June 2005.
- The Guildhall and its environs are referred to in the report also on this Agenda – Creating a vision for the future of Salisbury – it is suggested that any long term proposals for the use of the Guildhall be considered as part of the recommendations in that report.

**4. Recommendations:**

It is recommended that option appraisals be undertaken in respect of the short term uses and any long term proposals be considered as part of the vision for the future of Salisbury.

**5. Background Papers:**

Cabinet report on creating a vision for the future of Salisbury

**6. Implications:**

- **Financial** : None at this stage
- **Legal** : None at this stage
- **Human Rights** : None at this stage
- **Personnel** : None at this stage
- **Community Safety** : None at this stage
- **Environmental** : None at this stage
- **Wards Affected** : City Wards
- **Consultation Undertaken:** Informal discussions, Public Meeting, City Centre Management