

REPORT

Cllr Mrs Warrander : Cabinet Member for Resources

OFFICE CENTRALISATION

Executive Summary:

Following three months of consultation with local groups and interested parties, the Council's Architects have put forward a proposed Master Plan Strategy for the Council's new office requirements. Approval of the outline strategy will allow for the production of a detailed Design Brief for a Planning Application submission.

Key Issues:

- Retain historic front of building with a new build to the rear accommodating all of the Council's requirements.
- Shared use of site with other public bodies.
- Confirmation that Full Council meetings to be provided off-site.
- Ensure that land assets are retained either to part fund the project or as development assets.
- Outstanding risks around heritage, landscape and archaeology.

Recommendations:

- (1) Note the current position with regard to the office centralisation programme.
- (2) Approve the outline Master Plan proposals for the site subject to considering any amendments resulting from the public meeting or the Staff Focus Group.
- (3) Authorise officers to proceed with the improvements to the Alamein Suite, Meeting Room and first floor toilets at City Hall for a budget estimate of £220,000.
- (4) Authorise officers to investigate alternatives to the City Hall as a venue for Full Council meetings and report back to a future meeting of the Cabinet.
- (5) Authorise officers to appoint a Project Officer to act as the client representative.
- (6) Authorise officers to appoint a full Design Team led by Stanton Williams to complete detailed design for submission of Planning Permission.
- (7) Request officers to continue discussions and negotiations with Wiltshire County Council and other potential partners and report back to a future meeting of the Cabinet.
- (8) Thank those groups, organisations and individuals for their contribution to the consultation process.

1. Matters for Consideration:

Cabinet is requested to approve the broad strategy as proposed by our appointed Architects for the development of the Bourne Hill and associated sites.

2. Introduction and Background:

In November 2003 the Cabinet approved the Council's outline office requirements for inclusion in the Client Development Brief for Architects. It further approved the consultation process to explore the full potential value of the site consistent with the reasonable views of stakeholders.

Since that report, following a competitive interview, the Council appointed Stanton Williams as its nominated Architects. Over the last three months Stanton Williams have consulted with potential users, interested local groups (including St. Edmund's Community Association) and statutory agencies involved in the planning process. Stanton Williams fed back the results of this consultation to the Office Design Group who has approved a Master Plan Strategy for the Cabinet's consideration.

A public meeting to discuss the proposed Master Plan Strategy was held on 17th June and the views expressed will be circulated to the Cabinet prior to the meeting.

3. Potential Partners:

As part of the consultation process the Council has had discussions with a range of bodies who have previously expressed an interest in joining with the Council for the provision of public offices.

There has been a strong level of support expressed by the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registrar and Wiltshire County Council for this function to move from its existing location in Bedwin Street to Bourne Hill.

Wiltshire County Council has also expressed an interest in taking office space for up to 140 employees connected with children's services. An outline report will be made to its Cabinet on the 18th June and the outcome of this will be reported to the Cabinet.

The Primary Care Trust and Wiltshire County Council Adult Services are currently reviewing their office requirements in Salisbury and will consider whether any part of the development around Bourne Hill is suitable for their purposes later in the year. They may also consider whether other existing premises that could become redundant as a result of the office centralisation programme are suitable.

The County Council has been requested to confirm its intentions by the end of July.

4. Master Plan Strategy:

Indicative plans and images and a model will be available to view at the Cabinet meeting.

Overall the Council's strategy has been formalised to meet two key objectives:-

- The ability to locate all services as identified in the space audit on one site; and
- Utilise or protect for the future our land assets at their maximum development value.

The Master Plan principles are as follows:-

- The original part of the Council House which is Grade II* Listed will be retained and enhanced.
- The Victorian extension and all the temporary buildings to the rear of Bourne Hill site will be demolished and removed.
- A new two-storey building plus a 'penthouse' roof space built to the same height as the front of the Council House will be constructed.
- It is intended that this will house all of the District Council's office requirements as set out in the previously agreed space planning audit .
- The requirement for a Council Chamber will be made off-site.
- The Alamein Suite and Meeting Room at City Hall will be upgraded to support their continued use as training, small conference and meeting rooms for the public meetings of the Council (e.g. Cabinet and Scrutiny).
- Space within the front part of Bourne Hill (Grade II* Listed) will be offered to the Births, Deaths and Marriages service. It is considered that some of the existing spaces could be modified for their purpose and provide a prestigious setting for their activities.
- It is proposed to build the 'One-Stop-Shop' and Customer Services Contact Centre in an exciting new space adjacent to the front of the building (utilising the space currently occupied by the Print Unit).
- The Contact Centre will be accessed by pedestrians from the front of the building through what is currently the I.T. Server Room.
- A new and separate two-storey building will be constructed on the current College Street Car Park. The Council's preference is for this building to be office accommodation. The Council will therefore initially be discussing with Wiltshire County Council their interest in the proposed office space. If however this is declined within a reasonable time scale, the disposal of this development will be made available to other companies wishing to locate in Salisbury. If after a reasonable amount of time this proves to be unviable, the Council will seek to optimise its assets by using the site for housing.
- The future use of the land currently occupied by the redundant swimming pool is at this stage less clear. Wiltshire County Council are considering whether this site would be required either as a preferred location instead of the College Street buildings or as a potential future site for joint County Council and Primary Care Trust services. This site may be required for car parking purposes dependent upon the conclusion of a review into parking and transportation issues around the development. The Council is however clear that this site will be retained as an asset with a development value to either be used within the same timescales as the proposed development or at some stage in the future.
- The Secret Garden will be relocated to form a central landscape feature between the Bourne Hill extension and the new building on College Street Car Park.
- There will be no public parking at the front or side of Bourne Hill (with the exception of a small number of disabled spaces and a drop off facility for bridal cars). Parking for staff and elected members at the offices will be strictly limited and provided to the rear of the proposed buildings. Spaces will be allocated for visitors and for vehicles used only in the undertaking of Council business.

All proposals are still subject to the negotiation and agreement of Planners and statutory consultees. These discussions will be influenced by current studies, almost completed, which may impact upon the overall strategy.

5. Implications:

As part of the preparation for the Master Plan an independent appraisal of the suitability of the City Hall as a venue for Full Council meetings and for other purposes has been completed (summary report to the Design Team attached in Appendix 1).

The Office Centralisation Design Group was clear that a Council Chamber should not be included within the Brief for the Bourne Hill site. However the Group was not convinced that the proposed changes to the City Hall main Auditorium to improve acoustics, sound system and heating and ventilation represented good value for money given that the improvements would have only limited benefit outside of the rare occasions the Council uses it. The Office Design Team therefore recommended that alternative venues are considered prior to making a final decision on the future venue for Council meetings.

With regard to improvements to the Alamein Suite and Meeting Room, the Design Team considered that these provide good value for money both in terms of alleviating space pressures on the Bourne Hill site and providing added value for hire at the City Hall. The Design Group therefore recommends to the Cabinet that they set aside a provisional budget estimate of £220,000 for the completion of these works.

Although the Council has moved forward significantly with this project there are still a number of unknowns and risks (see risk and issues log – Appendix 2). Some of these will inevitably run throughout the project given the size and scale of the potential development. The Office Design Group has worked hard to minimise the risks at this time and is confident that the project can now move to the next significant stage of detailed design for submission of a full Planning Application.

6. Future Activity:

There are a number of key studies that have still to be completed which will be needed to support the Architects in their detailed design of the scheme. These include a landscape strategy, historical assessment, archaeological investigation and a traffic and car parking study. It is expected that these will be completed by the end of July. The results of these studies, as previously indicated, may impact upon the Master Plan but should not undermine the basic principles of what the Council is trying to achieve.

In order to manage and control future stages of the Office Design Project, it is now considered appropriate to appoint a client representative Project Officer to co-ordinate the views and input from the Council and act as a single point of contact to the 'Design Team'. This will minimise the risk of project creep and cost concerns. The Project Manager will liaise closely with the Council's Property Services Manager to negotiate fees for the Design Team up to the completion of a successful Planning Application.

Although the Cabinet has previously considered some budget estimates for the scheme in terms of assessing its overall viability, further detailed work on budget preparation will need to be undertaken by an appointed Quantity Surveyor. This can only now take place as the detailed Design Brief becomes finalised. The findings from the Quantity Surveyor and funding options will need to be considered by the Cabinet prior to drawing up detailed specifications and tender documents.

Set out in Appendix 3 is a high level summary of future project timescales.

7. Background Papers:

Previous Cabinet papers, Space Audit.

8. Implications:

- **Financial:** The capital allocation of £220,000 for City Hall enhancements and the fees for design have been approved within the Council's capital programme.
- **Legal:** None.
- **Human Rights:** None.
- **Personnel:** None.
- **Community Safety:** None.
- **Environmental:** Sustainability skills will be incorporated within the appointed Design Team.
- **Ward(s) Affected:** St. Edmund.
- **Consultation Undertaken:** As attached with report, public meeting and Staff Focus Group, Councillors' open evening, Resources Scrutiny.

Office Centralisation Design Team

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REPORT

City Hall Improvements

1. Report Summary:

1.1 To appraise the Team of the current situation regarding improvements at the City Hall following receipt of the consultant's report.

2. Introduction and Background:

2.1 The City Hall Auditorium has been the chosen venue since July 2001 for six meetings of the District Council per annum.

2.2 Since this time there has been significant member dissatisfaction with the suitability of the City Hall as a venue for Council meetings. Criticism has been made of the poor sound quality and visual presentation facilities together with concerns regarding the heating, ventilation and air-handling systems.

2.3 The Alamein Suite and the Meeting Room continue to be used for corporate meetings, training days, seminars etc in addition to significant hire from external organisations.

2.4 The analysis in Appendix One shows the level of Council activity in the City Hall during the year ended 31 March 2004.

2.4 At its meeting on the 23rd July 2003 the Cabinet approved a report authorising Officers to bring forward a report on possible investment at City Hall in accordance with the emerging strategy regarding Office Centralisation. This would enable the City Hall to remain as the chosen venue for Council and other Committee Meetings and corporate functions, taking advantage of significantly improved facilities. Furthermore the City Hall could actively promote spare capacity to external organisations to build upon the already successful, conference, meeting and seminar business that are currently enjoyed.

2.5 Theatretech consultants were commissioned to investigate and report on the Auditorium sound system and general room acoustics in addition to exploring options for improvements to the visual presentation methods and possible redevelopment of the Alamein Suite and Meeting Room.

3. The Findings:

3.1 Auditorium Sound System.

3.1.2 The system is inadequate for main reinforced sound within the auditorium for the majority of events it is required, being underpowered, lacking bass and generally not profiled for the Council meeting type event in its central position. The sound system cannot provide the range and quality in the central area and cannot practically be modified each time such an event is required. Any new arrangements should be specifically targeted for voice – lift and absolute audio speech intelligibility and capable of being configured to the Council meeting set up with some flexibility for larger or smaller meetings.

3.2 Auditorium Acoustics.

3.2.1 Council meetings take place in a large rectangular room with four walls, positioned in a central space. The size of the room conspires against such small and more intimate gatherings, particularly those in the centre of the room on the flat floor area. The general acoustic in this area is at its worst, and the Council style meetings suffer making speech indistinct and random.

3.2.2 The principal focus point for Council meetings is the top table arrangement. This is acoustically weak, relying only on absorptive black drapes to create a backdrop.

3.3 Auditorium Visual aids.

3.3.1 Present visual aids consist of portable projection equipment set up on a stand facing a fast-fold front projection screen. This is not ideal and conflicts with the top table position.

3.4 Appraisal of Alamein Suite

3.4.1 The single set of doors to the rear escape stairs does not cope with the noise that intrudes from the auditorium. Intrusive noise is also evident from the auditorium control room and ceiling. This point has probably the most influence and restriction on the use of this room, particularly when sound checks are being carried out in the auditorium at the same time as meetings are taking place in the Alamein Suite, sound transference being at an unacceptably high level.

3.4.2 The parallel walls of the main room hinder the acoustics.

3.4.3 The lack of permanently installed sound system with hearing loop and the basic level of portable visual equipment inhibits the use of the room.

3.4.4 The general decoration, furnishings, fixtures and fittings are in need of updating.

3.5 Appraisal of Meeting Room.

3.5.1 The shape of the room inhibits the level of permanently installed audiovisual equipment.

3.5.2 The room is in need of an air-cooling facility and improved heating and ventilation system.

3.5.3 The general decoration, furnishings, fixtures and fittings are in need of updating.

3.6 Appraisal of Auditorium Heating and Ventilation systems.

Subject to separate report from Council appointed consultant (to follow).

3.7 Toilet facilities.

3.7.1 Gentlemen's and ladies toilets on the first floor are in need of updating and modernisation. Any new plans should ideally include provision for an adapted toilet.

4. Options for Consideration

4.1 Improvements to the auditorium sound system

4.1.1 To provide a new installation that addresses the existing deficiencies with the cabling infrastructure, induction loop facilities, mixer desk and amplification. Whilst some of the existing loud speakers may be retained, they require realignment and augmented with new speakers at the stage and mid central positions.

4.2 Improvements to auditorium acoustics and general sound insulation.

4.2.1 To provide additional absorption towards the rear of the auditorium and improve the absorption material to the existing material on the rear portions of the two side walls

4.2.2 To reduce external noise from the street and through the roof with upgraded doors and additional insulation within the building.

4.2.3 Improvement to the acoustics for meetings by creating four new walls around the space that the meetings occupy, i.e. room within a room. This will effectively create a new 'set in the round', a sort of loose enclosure which embraces the Council meeting seating and staging. The set up would be

purely made up of demountable devices, which create staging, walls and ceiling to enclose the chamber, but would not be permanent.

4.2.4 A demountable reflective shell on the stage that would wrap around the top table arrangement and reflect sound outwards.

4.3 Improvements to Auditorium Visual Presentations.

4.3.1 The audiovisual elements would be greatly improved by having the capacity to fly in a front projection screen immediately in front of an acoustic shell situated behind the top table. However, in this position sight lines from the top table remains an issue. Clearly further investigation is required in this area and further specialist advice required.

4.3.2 A new projector could be positioned centrally on the existing auditorium truss with an optimum position designed in accordance with sightlines etc Further investigation and specialist advice in this area is required.

4. 4 Improvements to Alamein Suite.

4.4.1 The walls require some additional acoustic treatment and the highly absorbent ceiling needs to be replaced.

4.4.2 The main external noise comes from the auditorium. Remedial action could be taken by installing a new acoustic door and screen to close off the area outside the auditorium control room. Treating the ceiling and roof void partition and replacement of the existing door leading to the fires escape with an acoustic door.

4.4.3 It may be possible to sub-divide the Suite by creating a new lobby in the outer lounge area with new double acoustic doors and extending the current storage area. New permanent or folding doors could be installed between the existing pillars. Whilst shortening the main room slightly it would prove useful on occasions when users require separate break out or catering space.

4.4.4 Permanently installing a sound system with induction loop with basic ceiling mounted loudspeakers.

4.4.5 A ceiling mounted projection system with maximum flexibility to cater for the different room configurations together with the purchase of new portable equipment and rail systems. Consideration could also be given to the purchase of an interactive whiteboard although any new system needs to be user friendly with a simple ' plug and play ' facility.

4.4.6 Redecoration, new lighting and new furniture and fixtures as required.

4.5 Improvements to Meeting Room

4.5.1 Install air-cooling system in Meeting Room similar to Alamein Suite.

4.5.2 Install permanent rail system for visual aids.

4.5.3 Consider purchase of inter-active whiteboard.

4.5.4 Redecoration, new lighting and new furniture and fixtures.

4.6 Refurbish toilets on first floor

4.6.1 To include plans for an adapted toilet.

5. Benefit Analysis.

Auditorium

<u>Improvements</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	
	To SDC	To City Hall
<u>Level One</u>		
Minor Improvements to Heating and Ventilation System (e.g. upgrade existing system and / or use of portable space heaters / coolers).	Bring temperature to more comfortable standards for Council Meetings.	None as would be ineffective and impractical for large audiences.
<u>Level Two</u>		
Minor Improvements to Heating and Ventilation System.	Bring temperature to more comfortable standards for Council Meetings.	None as would be ineffective and impractical for large audiences.
Improve Sound System and Room Acoustics	Enable Members, Officers and Public to hear proceedings more clearly.	Reduce expenditure on equipment hire. Reduce numbers of complaints.
<u>Level Three</u>		
Large Scale Improvements to Heating and Ventilation System.	Ensure that temperature in Auditorium remains at acceptable levels.	Increase customer satisfaction and reduce numbers of complaints.
Improve Sound System and Room Acoustics. Portable Acoustic Shells on flat floor and around top tables.	Enable Members, Officers and Public to hear proceedings more clearly.	Reduce expenditure on equipment hire. Reduce numbers of complaints.
Improve Visual Presentations	Enable Members, Officers and Public to see presentations more effectively.	Limited as City Hall / Salisbury not a significant destination for large-scale conferences.

Alamein Suite

<u>Improvements</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	
	To SDC	To City Hall
Improve Sound Insulation between Auditorium and Alamein Suite	Reduce noise intrusion during afternoon and evening events.	Reduce noise intrusion during afternoon and evening events.
Create new wall and lobby.	Creates an additional space for use as a breakout / separate catering area. Helps reduce noise intrusion from Auditorium.	Creates additional storage area for new and existing equipment. Room becomes more flexible Room more attractive to potential external clients.
General refurbishment and redecoration.	Create more comfortable environment.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.
Permanently installed sound system	Enable Members, Officers and Public to hear proceedings more clearly.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.
Permanently installed presentation system.	Enable Members, Officers and Public to see presentations more clearly without the need for trailing cables etc.	Room becomes more flexible. Room more attractive to potential external clients.
Refurbish 1st Floor Toilets.	Creates more attractive and comfortable environment.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.

Meeting Room

<u>Improvements</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	
	To SDC	To City Hall
Install Air-cooling Units	Create more comfortable environment.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.
General Refurbishment.	Create more comfortable environment.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.
Permanently installed flexible presentation system.	Enable Members, Officers and Public to see presentations more clearly without the need for trailing cables etc.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.
Refurbish 1st Floor Toilets.	Creates more attractive and comfortable environment.	Room more attractive to potential external clients.

5. Recommendations and Budget Costs

5.1 Auditorium

5.1.1 Installation of new sound system.	£	85,000
5.1.2 Acoustic improvements.		35,000
5.1.3 Improved visual presentation.		35,000
5.1.4 Acoustic band shell on floor and stage		40,000

5.1.5 Improvements to heating and ventilation system.	<u>To be advised</u>	
	Total Auditorium	195,000
5.2 Alamein Suite		
5.4 Sound insulation between the Auditorium and Alamein Suite.		50,000
5.5 Creating new wall and lobby.		40,000
5.6 General refurbishment.		30,000
5.7 Permanently installed sound system.		25,000
5.8 Flexible presentation system.		<u>15,000</u>
	Total Alamein Suite	160,000
5.3 Meeting Room		
5.9 General refurbishment.		15,000
5.10 Install Air-cooling units.		6,000
5.11 Audio Visual presentation systems.		<u>8,000</u>
	Total Meeting Room	29,000
5.4 First Floor Toilets		
5.4.1 Refurbishment and adapted toilet.		<u>12,000</u>
5.5 Professional fees and project management.		<u>58,000</u>
Grand Total:	£	446,000

Booking Statistics for the Year Ended 31st March 2004

Room	Total No. Of Events	Total No. Of Internal Hires	Internal Hires as % of Total Events	Total Income from Hires (Including Internal Room Hire)*	Total Income from Internal Room Hire*
				£	
Auditorium	158	13	8 %	84,000	9,000
Alamein Suite	267	97	36 %	29, 000	3,500
Meeting Room	216	63	29 %	14,000	3,000

* Excludes income from catering, staff and equipment recharges.

Office Centralisation Risk Register

Date Last Updated: June 04

Title of Risk	Impact	Probab.	Category	Risk Source	Owner	Risk Action	Action	Residual Status	Updated
Project Creep	High	Medium	Financial	Design Team	DN	Treat	Monitor project progress by Cllrs and Design team	OK	01.06.04
				Design Team	GC		Appoint Quantity Surveyor and Client Representative		01.06.04
				Design Team	AR		Resources Scrutiny maintain watching brief		01.06.04
Unforeseen Planning Requirements	High	Medium	Financial	Design Team	GC	Tolerate	Monitor requests and planning requirements through Design Group. Maintain separate client function	Concerned	01.06.04
Excessive decanting costs	Medium	Medium	Financial	Design Team	GC	Treat	Archetects to address decanting costs as a factor in master plan	OK	01.06.04
				Design Team	GC		Bring forward proposals for use of Churchfields		01.06.04
				Design Team	GC		Rent temporary accomodation within City if appropriate		01.06.04
Archeaological Constraints	Medium	Medium	Financial	Design Team	GC	Treat	Archaeological survey commissioned for summer	OK	01.06.04
Integral Council Chamber	High	Low	Financial	Design Team	GC	Terminate	Consider use of alternatives for Council Chamber	OK	01.06.04
Integral CCTV/Control room	Medium	Low	Financial	Design Team	GC	Terminate	Consider use Churchfields for long term use of CCTV/Control room	OK	01.06.04
Project becomes unfundable	Medium	Medium	Political	Design Team	AO/SW	Tolerate	Monitor	OK	01.06.04
Estimates for project exceed viability	High	Medium	Political	Design Team	AO/SW	Tolerate	Design Group monitor costs and viability of project	OK	01.06.04
Aborted Project	High	Low	Political	Design Team	DN/SW	Tolerate	Damage limitation plan if required	OK	01.06.04
Residents opposition to proposals	Medium	Medium	Reputation	Design Team	CJ	Treat	Address in communication plan. Continue to consult and communicate with local groups	OK	01.06.04
Local groups opposition	Medium	Low	Reputation	Design Team	CJ	Treat	Address in communication plan. Continue to consult and communicate with local groups	OK	01.06.04
Refused Planning Permission	High	Low	Reputation	Design Team	CJ	Treat	Consult widely and gain agreement in principle with Planners prior to submission	OK	01.06.04
Creating uncertainty for staff	Medium	High	People	Design Team	AMcC	Treat	Address in communication plan.	OK	01.06.04

Inconvenience from decanting staff	Medium	High	People	Design Team	AMcC	Tolerate	Communicate issues to staff	OK	01.06.04
Travel Plan changes	Medium	High	People	Design Team	CD	Treat	Early discussions on proposals with Unions and staff	OK	01.06.04
Working in partnership delaying project	Medium	Medium	Reputation	Design Team	DN	Treat	Set clear timetables and conditions for Partners	OK	01.06.04