

# Crawley Borough Council

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## Report to Overview and Scrutiny Commission 12 January 2015

### Report to Cabinet 14 January 2015

#### Town Hall Utilisation and Refurbishment

Report of the Director of Community & Partnership Services  
Report Number DC&PS/010

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#### **1. Purpose:**

- 1.1 For Cabinet to consider the retention of the Town Hall as the Council's administrative centre.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Town Hall continues to provide viable and effective accommodation, meeting the needs of the Council and Crawley residents.
- 1.3 For Cabinet to consider how the existing building might be reconfigured and refurbished as a community hub; realising opportunities for generating income and facilitating delivery of the holistic advice and support residents expect from the Council.

#### **2. Recommendations:**

- 2.1 To the Overview and Scrutiny Commission:

That the Commission consider the report and decide what comments, if any, it wishes to submit to the Cabinet.

- 2.2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- a) Approve the retention of the Town Hall as the Councils administrative centre.**
- b) Approve the schedule of advance building, mechanical and electrical refurbishment set out in 5.2.2.**
- c) Approve a supplementary capital estimate of £460,000 funded from useable capital receipts for implementation of Phase 1 works. That this sum is included in the capital programme that is approved by Full Council in February 2015 as part of the budget report.**
- d) Authorise the Head of Partnership Services to invite tenders for the appointment of a Design Consultant and in consultation with the Leader and the Head of Finance, Revenue and Benefits to accept the most beneficial tender and thereafter to enter into a contract with the successful Tenderer.**
- e) Authorise Officers to commission a detailed feasibility and appraisal, including consultation and engagement with stakeholders on options for optimising utilisation of the Town Hall complex, for consideration by Cabinet in June 2015.**

### **3. Reasons for the Recommendations:**

- 3.1 To ensure that the Council continues to optimise utilisation of the Town Hall complex, meeting the needs of both the Council and the residents it serves.

### **4. Challenges and Opportunities:**

- 4.1 Currently the Town Hall accommodates approximately 530 staff. It is estimated that over the next 10 years investment of £2.6 million will be required to maintain or renew the existing building infrastructure. This is over and above ongoing day to day costs involved in servicing (utilities, cleaning etc.) the building, which amount to approximately £1.2 million per annum.
- 4.2 Recent uncertainty over the future of the Town Hall (town centre regeneration) has resulted in the adoption of an “essential needs only” maintenance and refurbishment policy. The main building is now 50 years old and in need of significant investment if it is to remain fit for purpose.
- 4.3 The Council’s transformation work has also highlighted underutilisation of the building, with resultant comparatively high cost per m<sup>2</sup> of utilised space. The internal layout of the building does not (particularly in some areas) lend itself to flexible “in the work” leadership and team working.
- 4.4 More efficient and effective use of Town Hall Space from both a visitor and staff perspective would have a positive impact on service transformation, enabling a more efficient delivery of customer orientated services.
- 4.5 The existing Town Hall could be reconfigured to provide more flexible and adaptable office accommodation. This could include conversion of the ground floor to accommodate the “public interaction area” consisting of a new open plan central reception, contact centre, centralised services, interview rooms, cashier pay points, etc. Customer contact and support services (new facilities team, post & print services and community wardens) could be centralised around a new “service road” type layout.
- 4.6 Some small commercial kiosk units i.e. coffee shop, tourist information point, etc. could also be provided but are unlikely to generate significant amounts of revenue for the Council. The recent development appraisal work undertaken by Stanhope identified that the Town Hall site was not particularly attractive as a location for commercial activity, producing low site values for mixed use retail and leisure schemes.
- 4.7 The larger areas currently occupied by Crawley Homes & Housing Services and the 3 storey office block above and including the Reprographics area could also be made available – this block could be self-contained with separate external access/egress. Service efficiencies might be achieved by sharing these areas with third party organisations, including interested Voluntary Sector parties.
- 4.8 Further income opportunities could possibly be gained through conversion of Committee rooms and Council Chamber including relocating the Chief Executive offices and Members areas into areas more suitable for external commercial letting/bookings. Council business to take preference, these could possibly deliver an ad hoc income but should not be seen as commercial lettings.
- 4.9 Existing office areas on the upper floors would need to be reconfigured as open plan to provide more flexible accommodation, with increased central areas of local meeting rooms supporting efficient delivery of Council services.

- 4.10 Following re-configuration of the building the potential to generate additional income from third party occupation would increase as described above. Age UK has recently expressed a desire to relocate and is interested in renting the accommodation previously utilised as the work place nursery.
- 4.11 Voluntary sector groups would require security of tenure and subsidised rents if they were to relocate to the Town Hall. The groups contacted have indicated that they would only consider co-location if the arrangement provided at least a “break even” financial position for their organisation.

## 5 Proposed Programme of Works:

5.1 In responding to the challenges and opportunities referred to above it is proposed that work is progressed on two fronts.

### 5.2 Essential Upgrade of the Building Fabric and Services (Phase 1)

5.2.1 Reflecting the need to maintain building fabric including mechanical and electrical services including items which are already scheduled for early completion or have been recently completed and the items which will require additional funding.

5.2.2 Schedule of work (outside the existing Programme Maintenance approved budget)

<b>Essential works</b> (outside the existing Programme Maintenance )	<b>Financial years</b> <b>2015 to 2017</b>
Enhanced upgrading of toilet environment.	£300,000
Replacement of internal blinds	£80,000
Complete air conditioning rollout	£30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£410,000*</b>

\* note supplementary estimate as core maintenance cost is already included within the approved programme maintenance budget.

5.2.3 This will complement items highlighted in 5.3.2 below and the current approved Programme Maintenance schedule of works.

5.2.4 The current approved improvements to the Ground floor (G6) will proceed as planned as it is considered that future modifications will have a minimal effect and that these early works will provide an early indication of impact.

### 5.3 Refurbishment and Reconfiguration - Options Appraisal (Phase 2)

5.3.1 Involve staff and members in developing a new vision for the future use and refurbishment of the Town Hall.

5.3.2 Highlight the Council’s commitment to completing, in advance, the essential works following the concerns raised within the staff survey including items referred to in 5.2 above.

- Improved energy efficiency,
- Effective Temperature and environmental control,
- Toilets that work (consistently),
- Refurbished and more kitchen areas,
- Replacing old/ broken blinds and windows.

5.3.3 Appoint an officer project team and external design consultant to undertake a feasibility study developing initial ideas expressed in section 4 into a detailed and costed proposal for reconfiguration / refurbishment of the existing Town Hall.

5.3.4 Timescale for Phase 2 (subject to Cabinet approval):

Communicate vision to stakeholders*	January 2015
Appoint Project Team	January 2015
Consultant appointment	February 2015
Consultation and engagement**	April to July 2015
Essential upgrade works	April 2015
Cabinet Report	September 2015

\* Initial message to staff and stakeholders linked to the results of the staff consultation and informing all that the Town Hall will be reviewed along side a major refit and modernization of the existing building infrastructure.

\*\* First ideas floated on layout and potential uses of the exiting spaces including examples of environment / facilities and income generating opportunities.

5.4 Refurbishment and Reconfiguration – implementation (subject to Cabinet approval)

5.4.1 Develop into detail design, procurement process and appointment of main contractor, programme and budget. Continue to move forward on the essential programme of works in phase 1.

5.4.2 Timescale (subject to Cabinet approval in June 2015):

Design and specification	September to December 2015
Tender / appointment	December to February 2015
Staff Temporary decant	March 2016 to end
Start on site	June 2016 to December 2016

## 6 **Financial and Other Implications:**

6.1 Essential works (phase 1)

6.2 A supplementary capital estimate of £410,000 is required to implement the essential works programme outlined in 5.2.2 as this work is over and above the current approved budget for programme maintenance.

6.3 A supplementary capital estimate of £50,000 is required to appoint an external design consultant to work with the officer working group to develop detailed options for the reconfiguration of the Town Hall.

6.4 There are no legal implications arising from this Report, however legal agreements may need to be entered into with partners for use of the Council building.

## 7 **Background Papers:** None

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