

Report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee



Date of meeting: 28 January 2020



Subject: Transformation Programme – Accommodation Strategy

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Democratic Services: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

(1) That the current progress with the Accommodation Strategy be noted.

Report:

1. Work on the Refurbishment of the Civic Offices is progressing well, and this report sets out the activity that has been undertaken since the approval to proceed at Cabinet in October 2019. This is a key corporate project and as such a governance structure has been established to oversee the performance and monitoring of the project. This paper provides a progress update on the key workstreams as follows:

- (i) Programme Management framework;
- (ii) Planning Process;
- (iii) Procurement;
- (iv) Communications;
- (v) Staff Engagement;
- (vi) Decant Process;
- (vii) Member Consultation.
- (viii) ICT

Programme Management Framework

2. A Programme Board has been established and meets on a monthly basis. This is a Corporate Project that involves all areas of the Council business and as such the Board is made up Services Directors, Strategic Directors and the CEO. The group covers the detailed activity of each workstream, reviews risks, and agrees communications. The Corporate Risk Management Group reviews the Accommodation risk map at each meeting.

Planning Process

3. Listed building consent for the refurbishment works has been approved with some minor planning conditions that will be managed through the works contract.
4. A planning application for the external changes to the building is being prepared. This will enable an external entrance to the café area of the Civic Offices. The design work is still underway and further consultation will be undertaken before the full planning application is submitted.

Procurement

5. The cost consultants Gardener and Theobald (G&T) were appointed following approval of the waiver agreement on 24 December 2019. G & T have been commissioned to progress the preparation of the tender documentation for the refurbishment works. They will be supported by Bisset Adams (Architect) and BWB (Mechanical and Electrical engineers) in producing the specification.
6. It is proposed to use a public framework as the route to market, this prequalifies contractors and complies with the OJEU procurement process, thereby eliminating the need and the delays associated with the Council procuring via the European Journal itself.
7. The form of contract being proposed is a JCT with contractor's design. This is a standard form of contract and places design responsibility with the contractor, albeit, as a listed building, a lot of the works have been pre-specified and are embedded in the listed building consent.
8. Tender process: the requirement of the proposed framework is that all nine contractors who qualified will be asked if they are interested in submitting a tender. Those that confirm interest will be invited to submit formal competitive tenders that will be subject to the normal review and approval process.

Communications

9. The activities of the workstreams and important information for staff is being communicated on a regular basis via email, the intranet and through team meetings. Each month the Programme Board will sign off the key messages as the project progresses.

Staff Engagement

10. A 'Change Champions' group has been established and has had some initial meetings. The purpose of the group is to ensure adequate staff engagement across all areas of the business. It will enable staff feedback into the project and provides a forum to discuss ideas, changes, and promotion of the new ways of working.
11. There are several policies being drafted to reflect the changes in the new ways of working on a 7:10 ratio.
12. There are many opportunities for staff to become involved in the project and staff will continue to be engaged throughout the project programme.

Decant Process

13. A detailed decant plan has been developed which sets out how and when teams will be moved into the Condor building or other offices during the decant period. This process will

be managed in a phased approach during January – June 2020. Staff are being encouraged to start working within their teams on the new 7:10 working ratio in preparation for the return to the refurbished Civic Offices.

14. Some additional WC and meeting room facilities will be established to cover the decant period. Arrangements are also being put in place for a temporary customer reception whilst works are being undertaken. It should be noted that major works of this nature are disruptive and decant arrangements will require some compromises on the existing arrangements. The timeframe for the works period will be confirmed when the tender documents are returned during May. Until this time it is difficult to accurately confirm the length of the works period.

Member Consultation

15. A Member workshop was held in December 2019. The detailed plans for the building were presented at the workshop and members were able to review the pilot scheme on the second floor of the Civic Offices. The pilot demonstrates of how the furniture will look and gives an insight into the new open plan collaborative working spaces.

16. There will be further Member consultation workshop to progress the designs of the existing member space on the first floor of the Civic Offices.

ICT

17. The ICT Strategy is an important enabler for the project and has several key milestones including; decant preparations, home/agile working, disaster recovery, and audio-visual equipment. A project team is dedicated to working through the detailed activities to ensure staff are supported during the decant period and enabled to undertake agile working. The roll out of Microsoft Teams across the business is being undertaken over the next month. This will enable staff to communicate remotely in groups/teams therefore negating the need to present in the office for a meeting.

Resource Implications:

The cost for consultants and the refurbishment works has been included in the 2020/21 budget and medium-term financial strategy.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Any professional consultancy services will be procured in line with the Council procurement rules. The Civic Offices site has a draft allocation of housing within the Local Plan to be bought forward in the early years. There is a Governance Board in place and regular reports of progress back to Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

The refurbished building and will be safer by design and energy efficient.

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation with Partners to potentially occupy the Civic Offices continues. Consultation with members on the requirements and design has commenced and will continue. There is a full communication plan for staff through the project delivery phases.

Background Papers:

None

Risk Management:

A risk map has been developed and is reviewed monthly by the Accommodation Programme Board with mitigating actions reviewed. Key risks identified are:

1. Failure to achieve Listed Building Consent - complete
2. Delays and disruption to services through the decant period
3. Major incident on site
4. Interruption of CCTV and safer neighbourhoods team
5. Failure in staff/member communications.
6. Impact of cost and time overruns on the project.