

Bath & North East Somerset Council

DECISION MAKER:	Cllr Richard Samuel, Cabinet member for Economic Development and Resources	
DECISION DATE:	On or after 17 June 2021	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
		E 3283
TITLE:	Preparing for the Future Programme – Keynsham Civic Centre Redesign	
WARD:	Keynsham	
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM		
List of attachments to this report: Appendix 1: Business Case for Keynsham Civic Centre Re-Design Appendix 2: Preparing for the Future Cabinet Report E3261		

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 A previous review of office accommodation showed that Keynsham Civic Centre has been under-utilised for some time as the space is not being used effectively. A re-design of the internal space will allow us to improve utilisation and capacity constraints of this office building and contribute to delivering existing budget savings in the Estates service from a reduction in our number of office buildings. This report seeks approval of capital budget for Keynsham Civic Centre Re-Design.

2 RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources is asked to;

- 2.1 Fully approve £1.655m from the provisional capital budget for Keynsham Civic Centre redesign for the Preparing for the Future Programme.
- 2.2 To delegate authority for future approval of provisional capital budget to the Director of Business Change and Customer Services in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Resources.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Preparing for the Future Programme will deliver changes to how we work by streamlining use of office buildings and improving workforce flexibility. It supports changes to how we now work and how we will deliver services in the future. The aim is to equip all staff to have a good day's work by providing them with the

right technology, enabling blended working, being flexible in our approach to promote wellbeing and ensuring an effective work/life balance.

- 3.2 By changing the way our office buildings are used there will be a break-down of the existing silo working between services, and the opportunity for increased collaboration between teams leading to improved staff morale, well-being and productivity.
- 3.3 We know that employees value face-to-face time with their teams and colleagues to share ideas and get advice and guidance and it is important that our office buildings provide this. The current design of Keynsham Civic Centre does not provide enough open plan or individual zone spaces to enable team collaboration. This project aims to resolve this by delivering spaces for collaborative working, flexibility, training, presentations and events which will help bring teams together and reduce silo working.
- 3.4 The redesign will also enable us to design an office that mitigates issues around increased numbers of having the Civic Centre as their workbase, by creating a flexible environment that allows individuals to work from home, office or any other place conducive to their working needs i.e. coffee shop or the ever increasing coworking offices.

Planned Redesign Works

- 3.5 The project scope will include defining a strategy for how the business will work operationally under the constraints of a building with limited capacity. Improvements will be made to the flow of the environment, fire strategy, acoustic performance of spaces, addressing issues with the current welfare and wellbeing facilities and delivering various workplace zones that enable our employees to work productively.
- 3.6 The project will also determine what changes can be made to the building to create larger relaxed open plan spaces that promote hot desk working, social collaboration and a sense of belonging. It will improve and update the internal environment, including changing the layout and décor to optimise meeting rooms, wayfinding and improving partitioning within the building and entrance foyer.
- 3.7 The project will result in a workspace that is planned and suitable for the future of the business. Refurbishment works will include creating larger open plan zones, soft furnishings, IT improvements, a partner hub, a training suite and well-being changes e.g. showers, toilets, cycle racks and food and beverage facilities. Power supply will be installed throughout the building at convenient spaces to enable employees to login and work anywhere. A reduction in dedicated desks will allow us to be more creative with how we utilise the building, moving away from large team spaces to more flexible areas for teams to come together when required. This will also help reduce the amount of unnecessary storage that is accumulated along with dedicated desks.
- 3.8 A fundamental principle of the Preparing for the Future programme is to ensure we engage with staff throughout the entire process of moving to a future way of working, allowing for consultation and feedback and taking on board staff views. Whilst we are clear with staff that work needs to be done differently in the future, we understand the importance of listening to their views and taking them with us

on this journey to ensure acceptance and enabling change to be embedded successfully and efficiently.

3.9 The proposed redesign of Keynsham Civic Centre aims to:

- (1) Develop a blended environment that employees want to visit, bringing the workforce together as a community, enabling collaboration, productivity and IT innovation.
- (2) Create bookable collaboration spaces to allow employees to come together face-to-face and work as a team when required.
- (3) Create private and confidential meeting spaces to enable individual and group conversations.
- (4) Improve acoustic performance within the building to support new working environments.
- (5) Deliver a partner hub workspace that enables community collaboration with other local councils and extending benefits to employees who can work elsewhere.
- (6) Make better use of space available to support closure or re-profiling of other offices.
- (7) Reduce travel and parking expenses, encouraging working from home, cycling and walking to work schemes.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 Section 2 of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 provides a general duty on every employer to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of all his employees. The Corporate Health and Safety Manager is part of the project team.
- 4.2 The design of the office arrangements will be flexible to ensure all appropriate infection control measures are in place in accordance with latest legislative provisions, national policy and public health advice.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The project provides an opportunity to co-locate a range of council services in a single building, sharing resources and overheads while helping to enable a more joined up and collaborative approach. This co-location, together with provision of modern technology will increase flexibility and enable our workforce to tackle problems and queries as soon as they are received.
- 5.2 The programme will enable reduced operating costs through a reduction of office buildings / rationalisation of office space along with the opportunity to create revenue through the commercial letting of Lewis House with estimated annual income of £425,000. This will contribute to delivering existing budget savings in the Estates Service from a reduction in our office buildings.

5.3 A summary of the capital budget is provided below. A full breakdown of the capital budget, potential savings and income are included in the attached business case.

TYPE OF SPEND	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Conversion/refurbishment		700	0	700
Equipment		50	275	325
Fees - external		150	60	210
Fees - Internal		70	35	105
Contingency		225	90	315
				0
				0
Total	0	1195	460	1655

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on the Preparing for the Future Programme in August 2020 and an improvement plan is in place. Several impacts were identified, all with mitigating actions and a Service User Group is in place to enable full consultation with staff. The council's Inclusive Communities Manager is part of the council officer group leading this project and her advice and the wider team's guidance is being considered as the project develops.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE

8.1 In 2014 the Keynsham Civic Centre was an award-winning building for its high environmental performance. Officers are working closely with surveyors as proposals are developed to ensure that as a minimum this environmental performance is not compromised and that we identify any opportunities to improve environmental performance. For the carbon savings to be fully realised from this building the space needs to be fully utilised and the internal re-design of the building will support this aim.

8.2 This project will result in less employee travel:

- (1) It will enable us to reduce the number of Council offices, thereby reducing employee travel into Bath and between offices.
- (2) It will improve the facilities at Keynsham Civic Centre for staff who wish to cycle, walk or run to work encouraging sustainable travel choices.

9 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 If we do nothing, we will have a less efficient and responsive workforce who are restricted by ineffective processes and equipment. We will remain split across 4 offices across Bath, Keynsham and Midsomer Norton and continue to work in silos with very little space for team collaboration.

9.2 This would not support a change in culture or prepare us for the future of working differently. There would be no space for teams to come together for social and collaboration interaction due to the current design of the building. This has been a request of employees that has increased over the course of the pandemic. The building infrastructure is also constrained with a complex fire strategy that does not allow for all council employees to be in the space at one time due to the limited fire escapes and staircase locations.

10 CONSULTATION

10.1 The Chief Operating Officer, s151 Officer and the Monitoring Officer have been consulted on this report. In addition, the ward Councillors for the Keynsham Civic Centre have also been consulted.

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Background papers	Business Case: Keynsham Civic Centre – Redesign Preparing for the Future Cabinet report E3261
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