

Preparing for the Future Programme

Business Case: Keynsham Civic Centre – Redesign (Office Configuration Costs)

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Issue date: March 2021

Current Overview

1. Keynsham Civic Centre is now the primary locality for Bath and North East Somerset council, located centrally on the main town's high street. The office location is a busy public area with residents visiting the local shops and cafes close by. All Lewis House, St Martin's and most Guildhall colleagues will change their hub location to Keynsham Civic Centre.
2. The Civic Centre first opened seven years ago in 2014 and has been the council's office through a phased transition from the City of Bath to Keynsham. The building is amongst the most energy-efficient in the country and when built featured one of the largest council-owned solar panel systems in the UK.
3. The national lockdown to work from home has demonstrated that the council's workforce can work to a different model effectively whilst at home. Like many organisations, the Council has been reviewing its accommodation strategy, and Covid19 is accelerating a previously planned shift to a greater degree of flexible working.
4. The Council has made and will continue to undertake short term adaptations in-house to support front line services during the pandemic.
5. A great deal has been learnt about how staff have adapted to working flexibly over the last year and this has meant we are now able to consider how a blended working approach, where staff have the choice in how and where they work, is possible for the future.
6. A fundamental principle of the Preparing for the Future programme is to ensure we engage with staff throughout the process of moving to a future way of working, to allow consultation and feedback and take on board staff views. Whilst we are clear with staff that work will need to be done differently in the future, it is important that we listen to views, take staff with us on this journey to ensure buy-in and enable change to be embedded successfully and efficiently.

7. A previous review of our office accommodation has shown us 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 of this office building, increase productivity and deliver existing budget savings in Estates from a reduction in our office buildings and in HR&OD from a reduction in business travel.
8. The Preparing for the Future Programme aims to deliver changes to how we work which will streamline our use of office buildings and provide a more flexible workforce that reflects the changes in 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, being flexible in our approach to promote wellbeing and ensuring an effective work/life balance.

Proposed Scheme

9. The proposal is to design and deliver an internal re-design of Keynsham Civic Centre which will enhance the space, provide collaboration spaces and improve the capacity of the office building.
10. There will also be hot desking arrangements in some of our offices in the Guildhall and the Hollies for staff who need touch down spaces in Bath and Midsomer Norton.
11. Whilst a large majority of office based staff have told us they do want some choice and flexibility in how and where they work, we do know that individual circumstances differ and will dictate how flexible staff are able to be, and so managers of teams will be able to discuss the most suitable working arrangements for their teams.
12. The aim is to create a choice for staff by agreeing reciprocal arrangements with our key partners so that staff have some options about where they work, which are not just at Keynsham Civic Centre or at home. These options could also help to reduce travel time for some staff and increase work life balance.
13. The proposal is to deliver the changes in a phased approach to mitigate disruption to the council operation. The intention is to deliver the full architectural design by the end of June with a handful of small physical changes implemented in April that will be used as prototypes to keep employees engaged and enthusiastic about the larger changes to come. The impact of Covid has given us the time to understand what works and what needs improving when we move to a permanent agile way of working. With the closure of other BANES localities, we must deliver the programme now to ensure our employees can work productively again once social distancing

comes to an end. The IT capital project initiatives must integrate with this programme for both to be functionally successful.

Some of the key scope deliverables include:

- To deliver a proposal that accommodates both our public and private-sector spaces that enables at least 650 employees to be in the KCC at one time, subject to fire and ventilation constraints. The current capacity is around 550 staff.
- To create an innovated interior design that promotes collaboration, service and diversity, reflecting the need for security and privacy where needed.
- To deliver a phased design programme of works that enables employees to see change once they return to the office post Covid with minimal disruption to their working day.
- Deliver a partnership working space which will enable our key partners to book hot desks on the understanding there will be a reciprocal arrangement in their office buildings
- To develop and implement a strategy that improves technology and digital equipment for collaboration across multiple locations.
- To improve and replace existing branding/signage, artwork and graphics. This will include both internal and external signage to improve brand exposure and accessibility.
- To design dedicated spaces and facilities that enable private and confidential working and meetings to enable staff to work productively and efficiently.
- To improve toilets and general wellbeing facilities across the site.
 - Re-design of toilets, ensuring DDA and H&S compliance.
 - Increase shower capacity across the building to support the sustainability initiative and support the corporate objective to improve climate change.
 - Increase bicycle storage facilities.
- To improve lighting and overall ambiance across the building irrespective of time of day.

Strategic Objectives

EQUALITIES

14. 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 guidance is being considered as the project develops.

CLIMATE CHANGE

15. The streamlining of our office buildings and reducing the need to travel by encouraging blended working aims to contribute to our core policy of addressing the climate emergency in Bath. Work is underway to assess the carbon footprint of the changes to work base for the affected staff. The aim will be to improve the facilities at Keynsham Civic Centre for staff who cycle to work.
16. When it was built in 2014, Keynsham Civic Centre was an award-winning building for its environmental performance. Officers are working closely with our surveyors, as we develop the proposals, to ensure that as a minimum this environmental performance is not compromised and that we identify any opportunities to improve environmental performance

OPERATIONAL SAVINGS

17. The programme includes reducing the number of office buildings we use in Bath and changing the work base for most teams based at St Martin's Hospital, the Guildhall and Lewis House to be based from Keynsham Civic Centre instead.
18. The programme will enable reduced operating costs from a reduction of office buildings / rationalisation of office space along with the opportunity to create revenue from the commercial letting of Lewis House. It will deliver existing savings plans in the Estates service in terms of operating costs as well as in HR&OD from a reduction in business travel.
19. The project provides an opportunity to co-locate a range of services in a single building, sharing resources and overheads while helping to enable a more joined up approach.

Operational & Management Approach

20. The redesign programme will be owned and maintained by the Council with a dedicated project team and programme manager to oversee and manage progress throughout design and delivery. As described throughout the scope, the RIBA design aspect of the project will be carried out by David Kent Architects (DKA), who were identified and appointed via the B&NES

procurement framework. They will provide all elements of design whilst engaging with internal stakeholders across BANES to ensure the final layout sets a strategy that enables a productive, collaborative and efficient business model for Keynsham.

21. We have agreed a four-month design programme, with stage 1 (Concept design) already underway that takes us up to June before we commence a tender process for appointing a contractor to implement physical changes to the office. The programme includes implementing 'quick wins' and prototypes into the space by early April. This presents the opportunity for us to trial prototypes, furniture and workspaces and gain feedback from staff ahead of making wider permanent changes across the building.
22. Day to day maintenance throughout the programme will continue to be managed by the buildings FM team whose responsibility remains for major repairs and ownership of the site for operational purposes. FM will be a key stakeholder throughout the design and build phases to ensure proposals can be physically delivered and maintained at no additional cost.
23. A Service User Group (SUG) for this programme was set up in October 2020 and includes members from different service areas of the council. The main purpose of the group is to enable staff to have a say in how we build on the progress made with the Improving How We Work programme, to take feedback and discuss issues, and for the group members to be involved in the planning and redesign of Keynsham Civic Centre. They are also responsible for acting as change agents with their colleagues in order to help staff understand how they can work differently.
24. The group meet monthly in a large meeting where they have talked about their hopes and fears for the programme, had change management training and received several updates about progress with the programme. A number of smaller group meetings have recently been held with the purpose of hearing feedback from service areas about what is important to them. The themes that have emerged have since been shared with DKA to incorporate into their conceptual stages of design. The SUG members will join several workshops hosted by DKA to continue engagement throughout design.

Capital Summary

25. The programme has already had a provisional capital budget approved for £50,000 in February 2021. This funding was to complete early concept planning design work for the programme. This work was necessary to provide a clear feasibility study and longer-term project plan for the overall "Office Configuration Costs. We have now reached the stage whereby we have agreed the following capital costs to deliver the full scheme for internal design refurbishment.

26. The capital business plan provides £1,655,000 of funding to deliver the redesign scheme for interior refurbishment works, including architectural design and fit out, furnishings, space planning and independent surveys and analysis of the building to determine what occupancy is acceptable within the currently naturally ventilated building. These funds will include redesign of the toilets, an increased number of showers, construction of a training suite, creation of collaboration zones, development of larger welfare facilities such as catering zones and a partner hub space.
27. Due to the complexity of the building, particularly around the design of the existing build and its fire strategy dependencies significant contingency funds have been included in the business plan. The workforce's health and safety is a critical element to this programme as we move towards moving more people into the space than previously operated.
28. The Council has engaged Aecom fire strategy consultants to advise on building capacity to support DKA to deliver a design that overcomes fire and ventilation constraints as a result of the existing building design. The appointment is critical to the design as it will help define the occupancy levels. Whilst we do not expect capacity to increase significantly due to the fire strategy, there will be a better utilisation of the building than before due to the creation of flexible team meeting and collaboration spaces which will provide increased opportunities for teams to work together and improve productivity.
29. The capital costs are summarised as follows:

Type of spend	Detail	2021/22	2022/23	Total
Conversion/refurbishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract award pending for construction phase, using the Council's General Building Framework (NEC4) planned in August 2021 	700	0	700
Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contract award pending for equipment planned in August 2021 	50	275	325
Fees - external	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Architects engaged. Includes fees for M&E, QS, Fire and Acoustics specialist 	150	60	210
Fees - Internal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme manager appointed on fixed term contract 	70	35	105
Contingency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set at 20% of project cost 	225	90	315
				0
				0
Total		1195	460	1655

**It should be noted that this spend is to deliver internal changes to the building only with a small provision for external signage to support accessibility. Any external design proposals that derive as a result of the design analysis should be considered and costed before any instructions to proceed are granted.*

30. A separate capital programme is in place for IT to support the redesign of KCC.

Revenue Summary

31. The Council vacated St Martins hospital in July 2020 which represents a saving of £50K per annum.
32. As a result of working differently and conducting meetings virtually rather than in person the business travel savings for 2020/21 were forecast to be £150K but are more likely to come in at £350-400K. The projected saving for 2021/22 is £200K.
33. The commercial letting of Lewis House has the potential to yield up to £425K income per annum and realise operating savings of £172,130 per annum.

Rationale for delivering the programme now

34. The Council could retain the current office building estates and associated costs but would not be capitalising on the opportunity that the pandemic has presented us with. As a result of Covid the world of work is set to change on a permanent basis. It is recognised that organisations which proactively respond to the opportunities afforded by the pandemic and reorganise their arrangements, are most likely to have a more effective recovery.
35. In addition to the above delivering this business plan now, compliments and integrates well with our IT capital project. We will be providing the modern and equipped IT equipment that will increase flexibility and enable our workforce to tackle problems and queries as soon as they are received regardless of where they are working, whether at home, office or another B&NES/partner locality. The deployment of laptops and tools such as Microsoft Teams across the Council only provide further advantages to working agile and supporting the move to a flexible working environment.
36. Whilst staff currently work at home as a result of Covid-19 this has presented us a good opportunity to re-evaluate our office environment whilst giving us time to clear out our office space to reconsider how we reutilise the space in a post-Covid world.
37. In terms of the return to work for all staff based in our office buildings, the Government recently released the following statement:

*Ahead of Step 4 (no earlier than 21 June 2021), as more is understood about the impact of vaccines on transmission and a far greater proportion of the population has been vaccinated, the Government will complete a review of social distancing measures and other long-term measures that have been put in place to limit transmission. The results of the review will help inform decisions on the timing and circumstances under which rules on 1m+, face masks and other measures may be lifted. **The review will also inform guidance on working from home - people should continue to work from home where they can until this review is complete.***

38. Whilst there is great uncertainty at the current time about the coming months we will be preparing our offices to enable some staff to return when they are able to do so.
39. It is likely that social distancing measures will still be in place for the initial period of return (21 June 2021 at the earliest) as many staff will still not be vaccinated and many more will not have had their second dose. If this is the case then work carried out indicates the maximum capacity for the KCC building would be 25% of the current capacity.
40. We know from feedback how important it is for staff to meet and connect with colleagues and so in order to give as many staff as possible the opportunity to meet together we will be aiming to create bookable team collaboration areas rather than creating desk areas. It will also enable us to move these spaces around more easily than desks once work on the interior redesign starts.
41. At the same time will we look to adapt other work locations at the Guildhall, 4th floor of Lewis House and The Hollies to create bookable meeting spaces so there is a choice in location.
42. Whilst these meeting points may not be tech-enabled (unless staff have a laptop), they will at least provide an opportunity for team gatherings and collaboration after many months of interacting through a virtual world.

Overall Summary

43. The Preparing for the Future Programme aims to deliver changes to how we work which will streamline our use of office buildings and provide a more flexible workforce that reflects the changes in 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, being flexible in our approach to promote wellbeing and ensuring an effective work/life balance.