

Report of the Deputy Chief Executive

Report to Executive Board

Date: 16th July 2014

Subject: Proposal for Civic Hall accommodation review

Capital Scheme Number: 16995/CHA/000

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. On 27th July 2012, Executive Board approved injection of the full capital budget for the Changing the Workplace Programme (CtW), including the capital required for the new Merrion House development, decanting costs and refurbishment of office areas to enable new ways of working to be delivered in the further 3 retained buildings, namely Civic Hall, Enterprise House, and St George House.
2. This report sets out the context for developing a new committee room, to be included as part of the redevelopment of the First Floor West Wing in the Civic Hall.

Recommendations

Executive Board are requested to give Authority to Spend of £550K for the redevelopment of the new Committee Room from the Civic Hall Backlog Maintenance/ Adaptations scheme in the Capital Programme. This will enable these works to be carried out as part of the larger programme of works to redevelop the 1st Floor West Wing of Civic Hall.

1. Purpose of this report

- 1.1 Committee Rooms 6/7 have long been considered to be an entirely inadequate space for large public meetings due to restrictions of the public viewing area, limitations in terms of audio visual capabilities, some limitations for people with disabilities with the current room configuration, noise nuisance and temperature issues particularly in the summer months. Effectively the Council has no fit for purpose meeting space which involves the public, eg Plans Panels, Licensing, Executive Board and other high profile public meetings.
- 1.2 Due to these issues and recognising that wider works are being undertaken within the Civic Hall, officers have considered options for improving the provision of the Council's main public meeting space.
- 1.3 This report seeks Authority to Spend from the Capital Programme to be used to deliver the redevelopment of the main Council committee room as part of the other works proposed for 1st Floor West Wing in Civic Hall.

2. Background Information

- 2.1 The Changing the Workplace (CtW) Programme is a holistic programme of work delivering improved ways of working across the organisation, bringing four key areas of work together under people, process, technology / information, and workplace.
- 2.2 The programme is now moving into a significant delivery phase in the city centre following approval of the main Phase 1 business case in summer 2012. The net space (space to be released – space to be created) to be released under phase 1 between 2011 and 2017 is in the order of 120,000sqft. This would equate to a total overall reduction in office space of circa 32% in the city centre.
- 2.3 In July 2012, Executive Board agreed the expenditure of the full capital budget for the Phase 1 Changing the Workplace programme. This included funding for the new Merrion House development, decanting costs and refurbishment of office areas to enable new ways of working to be delivered in the further 3 retained buildings, namely Civic Hall, Enterprise House, and St George House.
- 2.4 As part of the works to the Civic Hall, the 1st Floor West Wing is programmed to be redeveloped to accommodate 'New Ways of Working' (NWoW) office accommodation and a new smaller Members Lounge. As part of the review of the area, it provided a timely and appropriate opportunity to consider the provision of access by the public to public meetings in this area.
- 2.5 Long-standing issues have been raised regarding the unsuitability of Committee Room 6/7 for the hosting of the Council's most important public meetings, as listed below:
 - Insufficient space for the public viewing area, as there are regularly members

of the public that cannot be accommodated within the gallery in the existing Committee Room 6/7 and there has been occasions where meetings have been forced to relocate, in order to accommodate the numbers in attendance.

- The room is not conducive for holding large public meetings. This has resulted in public complaints about the Council not being open and transparent due to some members of the public not being able to access meetings.
- Unreliable and inadequate audio/visual (AV) facilities, which is an increasing problem given the advancement of technology and requirements to broadcast and/or allow filming and recording of council meetings.
- Problems with the heating and air conditioning system in the room.
- Inflexible old furniture resulting in poor layout of the room.
- Noise pollution from Calverley Street and the hospital A&E.

2.6 The CtW programme were requested to consider the feasibility of providing a new larger committee room facility with an increased public gallery and recording facilities within the Civic Hall to resolve the above issues.

2.7 As other major works are being programmed to commence within Civic Hall offices the issues with Committee Rooms 6/7 need to be addressed as a matter of urgency, now would be an appropriate time to develop a fit-for-purpose committee room that can support the local democratic process for many years into the future.

2.8 The capital programme which was approved at full council on the 26th February 2014 included a programme for works to the Civic Hall for backlog maintenance/adaptations. Within this programme, £550k was identified for redevelopment of the committee rooms, which would complement the proposed redevelopment works being undertaken by CtW on the 1st Floor West Wing.

2.9 A drawing of the existing accommodation and meeting space is attached at Appendix 1.

3. Main Issues

3.1 In considering the issues, there were essentially three options available. An option to do nothing and an option to refurbish the current Committee Room 6/7, both of which were discounted as they failed to address the issues and concerns being raised by Elected Members and members of the public and does not provide long-lasting sustainable solutions.

It should be noted too that the do nothing option will still represent an estimated cost of £192,000. This is because the building management system (which controls heating, air conditioning and lighting) is beyond its reasonable life and constantly

being repaired: further given the new scheme will have a twenty year life: some upgrading of furniture will be required. The third and proposed option, seeks to address all the issues raised and is detailed below.

3.2 Create a new larger committee room across the full width of 1st Floor West and relinquish the current committee rooms 6/7. - (see proposed layout in Appendix 2 and Appendix 3 example of potential furniture):

This would create a modern much larger committee room facility; the provision of a much larger public seating gallery, new audio visual equipment, upgraded the air conditioning and heating systems, and the creation of a waiting area. The committee room will be fitted with moveable walls to give it the added advantage of being able to convert from one very large room into two separate, but still relatively large rooms, to optimise use of space when the larger public gallery is not required. The main committee room would be on the courtyard side to reduce impact of noise from the roadside.

This option will require a new Members Lounge to be relocated to a smaller area within the 1st Floor West Wing, as well as relinquishing Committee Rooms 6/7 to be utilised as New Ways of Working office accommodation.

3.3 Benefits

The benefits of the proposed option for the new committee room are as follows:

- it will enable the Council to operate in a modern environment that provides openness and transparency of decision-making; encouraging more engagement in the democratic process is a key driver for reconfiguring this provision
- larger public viewing gallery enables citizens to observe the consideration of issues that are important to them;
- the new Committee Room will be fully accessible;
- it provides one large committee room with moveable walls to offer the flexibility to split into two separate, but still sizeable, committee rooms;
- a new facility that meets modern standards and is fit-for-purpose;
- the investment in the Civic Hall will be beneficial for years to come;
- it provides much improved options to configure meeting layouts to facilitate public speaking eg: at Plans Panels;
- it meets the Council agenda for increased democratic engagement;
- provides new AV equipment (capable of supporting the recording of meetings);

- meets the Council Values;
- uses the only available space in the Civic Hall to provide a new larger committee room facility, and;
- offers a sustainable solution than the current facility.
- Incorporates the costs of essential repair or replacement over the next few years of air-conditioning, the planned energy efficient lighting replacement programme and also the replacement costs of the existing microphone system. These total £90k of costs which would have been incurred, but are included within the refurbishment proposal.

3.4 Design Proposals and Full Scheme Description

3.4.1 As previously outlined, the proposed new committee room will form part of the wider 1st Floor West Wing redevelopment, including the creation of new ways of working office environment and reduced Members Lounge accommodation. This report only focuses on the Authority to Spend of £550K for the redevelopment of the new Committee Room from the Civic Hall Backlog Maintenance/ Adaptations scheme in the Capital Programme.

3.5 Programme

3.5.1 The project will be delivered in financial year 2014/15, with works taking place between October 2014 and March 2015.

4. Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation

4.1.2 Consultations have taken place with officers from Governance, Scrutiny, Licensing and Planning and their views and concerns incorporated into the specification, more detailed and wider consultation will take place in the coming weeks.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 The CtW Programme Equality Impact Assessment undertook specific consultation with both staff and groups representative of protected groups.

4.2.2 There are known accessibility issues with the current Committee Room 6/7. Changing the Workplace Programme commissioned accessibility audits to be undertaken for all the retained buildings, including Civic Hall. Any designs for the new larger committee room will ensure it is fully accessible. An Equality Impact Assessment for the whole redevelopment of the wing will be undertaken as part of the detailed design stage.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

- 4.3.1 The CtW Programme supports the Council's ambition to be the Best City Best Council in the UK and the Council's Values. It will assist in the achievement of outcomes contained in the Best Council Plan 2013 – 2017.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 The option to provide a new larger committee room requires an estimated capital investment of £550K: £90k of which relates to essential upgrading of the building management system (air conditioning, lighting etc.) This will create a new larger modern fit for purpose committee room facility which will fully meet its democratic responsibilities and meet public expectations within the Civic Hall, which is the central democratic hub of the council. Full Council injected a provision of £550K into the capital programme on the 26th February 2014 for Civic Hall backlog maintenance/ adaptations.

4.4.2 It should be noted the 'do nothing' option is estimated to cost approximately £192,000 (see para 3.1.) It should also be noted that there has been no significant capital investment in these facilities for over twenty years. The facilities proposed here will have a minimum twenty year life. The investment therefore, in redeveloping this public area of a Grade 1 listed building, equates to approximately £ 30,000 a year in real terms.

4.4.3 Capital Funding and Cashflow

The table below illustrates the breakdown of capital for each element of this project:

Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2013 £000's	FORECAST				
			2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
LAND (1)	0.0						
CONSTRUCTION (3)	345.6			345.6			
FURN & EQPT (5)	204.4			204.4			
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0			0.0			
OTHER COSTS (7)	0.0						
TOTALS	550.0	0.0	0.0	550.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2013 £000's	FORECAST				
			2013/14 £000's	2014/15 £000's	2015/16 £000's	2016/17 £000's	2017 on £000's
LCC Borrowing	550.0			550.0			
Total Funding	550.0	0.0	0.0	550.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Balance / Shortfall =	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

4.4.4 Revenue Effects

4.4.5 Any revenue implications will be met from existing budgets

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

- 4.5.1 There are no legal implications to this project other than meeting the Equality Act, compliance has previously been outlined in section 4.2.
- 4.5.2 Given this programme has capital provision under scheme 16995/CHA/000 (Civic Hall backlog maintenance /adaptations: approved by full council on 26th Feb,) it has not been published on the Forward Plan: though clearly the decision is subject to 'call-in.' As part of the scheme is about improving democratic engagement, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel wishes members have the opportunity to review the particulars of the proposal at Executive Board.

4.6 Risk Management

- 4.6.1 The Council is at risk of not achieving the Best Council/Best City ambitions with the current facilities for the council and the public. The proposed new committee room offers modern, fit for purpose facilities for holding public meetings and to improve public accessibility to key council decisions.
- 4.6.2 Costs of £550k identified within this report are based on current designs and high-level feasibility estimates from NPS Leeds.

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Civic Hall acts as the strategic democratic hub for the Council in the city centre and the proposed investment will provide a new larger fit-for-purpose committee room that will benefit both the Council and the citizens of Leeds. The increased benefits of providing a new larger committee facility is better value for money than simply refurbishing an existing provision that will not meet the Council's needs now or in the future.
- 5.2 In terms of taking the project forward and to enable consultation on designs to be undertaken with Members, Authority to Spend is required as detailed in the Recommendations (Section 6).

6. Recommendations

- 6.1 Executive Board are requested to give Authority to Spend of £550K for the redevelopment of the new Committee Room from the Civic Hall Backlog Maintenance/ Adaptations scheme in the Capital Programme. This will enable these works to be carried out as part of the larger programme of CtW works to redevelop the 1st Floor West Wing of Civic Hall.

7. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Existing floor plan of 1st Floor West

Appendix 2 – Proposed New larger Committee Room

Appendix 3 – Example of Potential Furniture

8. Background documents¹

8.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.