

THIS ITEM IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY

(Please note that "Information Only" reports do not require Integrated Impact Assessments, Legal or Finance Comments as no decision is being taken)

Title of meeting: Cabinet

Date of meeting: 7 March 2023

Subject: Civic Offices Regeneration

Report by: Natasha Edmunds, Director of Corporate Services

Report author: Megan Carter, Head of Major Projects

Wards affected: Charles Dickens

1. Requested by

1.1. The report has been requested by Cabinet from the Civic Office Regeneration (COR) Steering Group.

2. Purpose of report

- 2.1. This report provides an update to Cabinet following progress made since September 2022 following a full council motion¹ to explore options for the potential relocation of the existing building and consequently, to understand what use the existing building could have.
- 2.2. The report notes the information previously provided, including running costs, space used and anticipated future costs to bring the civic office in line with modern standards and compliance with statutory safety measures.
- 2.3. The report sets out the project structure and provides an overarching update on work underway, details the next steps and outlines current timelines.

3. Information Requested

3.1. In light of the existing building condition survey, the findings of the accommodation review and the changes to working practice arising from the pandemic it has been acknowledged by Members that opportunities need to be explored for the future of the civic offices/civic space.

¹ [Agenda for Full Council on Tuesday, 11th October, 2022, 2.00 pm Portsmouth City Council](#)- Item 100

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- 3.2. Full Council debated a notice of motion on the 19th July 2022 which was passed and asked the administration to bring a report to the October Full Council meeting that considers the future of the Civic Offices.
- 3.3. Following the formation of the COR Steering Group², (previously COMWG), it was clear that there was a need for an agreement on the role of the civic office, the services it provides, the community it serves and how the staff needed to provide these services will work in the future. It has also been clear that members have a further ask of the civic space, one that is tethered to the Guildhall and the council chambers.
- 3.4. Full council debated the report on the 11th October 2022, which outlined information that had been made available to the COR Steering Group, parameters and principles which had been agreed and proposed next steps.
- 3.5. Full Council [resolved](#) a report should be brought to Cabinet in March 2023 with options. As per 3.3 this work is underway but is not yet completed. A new timeline is captured as part of section 6.
- 3.6. In order to progress this work a project management team from Major Projects, Regeneration was established in December 2022 who work alongside Corporate Services and Building Services.
- 3.7. A new chair of the COR Steering group was also appointed, Cllr Steve Pitt.
- 3.8. The project has been split into 2 key workstreams

Workstream 1: The new civic office space

Workstream 2: The existing building

4. Workstream 1: The new civic office space

- 4.1. To progress further and develop any options, including a 'do nothing' option, additional information and data is needed. For example the actual square footage of space required for service delivery, the different policies against which compliance is needed, financial impact, customer analysis, utilisation, delivery options etc.
- 4.2. A business case is required to provide the following:
 1. Confirm options for PCC should they wish to vacate the civic offices, including the re-provision of council offices on a much smaller site in the city centre.
 2. Confirm requirements should PCC choose to remain in the existing building if it is refurbished

² This group is attended by representatives from all political parties. Attendees are listed in Appendix A

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3. Costed proposals for alternative working solutions for the Civic Offices functions, including travel and parking.
4. Current running costs for the civic office.
5. Alternative income generating uses for the current civic offices.
6. Understanding market value of the civic
7. Delivery routes for proposals

4.3. Faithful and Gould have now been appointed to complete this work. They have identified a 16-week programme which will result in a report and presentation to members.

5. Workstream 2: The existing building

5.1. Work is being undertaken by Leslie Jones Architecture (LJA) to understand the potential for the existing building plus the opportunity to look further at regenerating Guildhall square and the surrounding public realm.

5.2. The work undertaken will explore:

1. Reusing the existing building
2. Demolishing the existing building
3. The accessibility of the building
4. How the building can better showcase existing heritage assets
5. How permeability can be enhanced
6. Portsmouth's arrival sequence
7. The economic impact of this space.
8. Potential design ideas

6. Next steps

6.1. Following the successful external appointments and a new project management team the following work is underway for approval at the next COR Steering group in March.

6.2. Formal governance will be proposed to the cross-party steering group and full project initiation documentation. Including terms of reference for the group plus proposed agendas.

6.3. Based on work currently underway and on the assumption that the programme runs to schedule it is likely that a feasibility business case including architectural designs would be ready by Summer 2023 enabling a decision on a preferred option to be taken shortly thereafter. Following a decision to proceed a detailed feasibility study would be undertaken during that latter part of 2023 with a view to implementation from the beginning of 2024 - depending on the option selected this could include

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planning submission, commercial negotiation on alternative sites, identification of capital funding etc.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

Appendix A: Cross party steering group minutes

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Agenda Full Council Tuesday 11 th October 2022, Portsmouth City Council (Agenda Item 100)	Agenda for Full Council on Tuesday, 11th October, 2022, 2.00 pm Portsmouth City Council