



**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)**

<b>Title of meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Civic Offices Regeneration</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
<b>Report by:</b>	Chief Executive, Natalie Brahma-Pearl
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	Cllr Steve Pitt, Leader
<b>Wards affected:</b>	Charles Dickens

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**1. Requested by**

1.1 Cross Party Working Group

**2. Purpose**

2.1 To update Cabinet on the progress of the Civic Offices Member Working Group and to confirm the next steps and key outputs.

**3. Information Requested**

Background

3.1 Following a Notice of Motion at Full Council on the Sustainability of the Civic Offices in July 2022, work began on a high-level options appraisal of the current Civic Offices and possibilities for alternative locations and or refurbishment of the existing.

3.2 A report was taken to Full Council in October 2022, recommending review and continuation of the Civic Offices Member Working Group (COMWG), and requesting a report to Cabinet and Full Council with high level options appraisal, financial appraisal and recommendations by March 2023. A further update was provided to Cabinet in March 2023, which noted further work was ongoing. There has been some delay for a variety of reasons and this report provides a further update.

3.3 To help protect the future options of the Council a Certificate of Immunity, to prevent the Civic Offices building being listed for 5 years, has been submitted to Historic England and we await the outcome of this application. Historic England have

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informed us that an application to list the Civic Office has been submitted. The outcome of this is also awaited.

- 3.4 A high-level options appraisal for potential uses of the existing Civic building has been produced. The work to date has centred around the 'art of the possible' for the existing building, which has resulted in the articulation of several options for the current building as well the option of possible alternative locations.

### Progress to date

- 3.5 Following the analysis of the building condition, consideration now needs to be given to what the Council will look like in coming years, both in terms of service delivery and its accommodation needs. This is a unique opportunity to review and potentially deliver significant organisational change, which will enable the Council to deliver its services to residents and visitors in a way which is fit for the future.
- 3.6 It is widely acknowledged that the current building is too large for its current use. An average of around 1,000 staff attend the office on a daily basis, leaving large areas unused. The project will seek to downsize the accommodation whilst enabling the modernisation of service provision to achieve operational efficiencies, reduced carbon emissions and respond to changing customer expectations.
- 3.7 As has been previously noted, the building is a key contributor to the carbon emissions within the city. In order to effectively tackle the climate emergency and be Carbon Net Zero by 2030, any future council office accommodation needs to be of high-quality design and construction to produce significant longer-term carbon, revenue and capital savings.
- 3.8 A new building could also provide an opportunity to drive revenue, through additionality of the build e.g. alternative uses on the same site. An enhanced Civic Centre could be used as a catalyst for wider city centre regeneration, something which has been evidenced in other successful projects, for example in Crawley.
- 3.9 In order to define and shape the future requirements of the City Council, a capital bid has been submitted to facilitate the onboarding of resources to identify how the Corporate Strategic Objectives of Productivity, Customer Experience, Digital Inclusion and Partnerships will be delivered.
- 3.10 Organisational Strategies, including the Climate; Health & Wellbeing; Economic Development & Regeneration; Medium Term Financial; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and the Digital Strategies provide the context for the future operating model. The components of people, accommodation, customer services, finance, governance and digital, data and technology will form the basis of a blueprint for the future delivery model.

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- 3.11 The Council currently works with a significant number of partners in both service delivery and provision of accommodation. These partners are aware of this project and are in the process of reviewing their own accommodation needs (where necessary). The benefit and synergies of collaboration and, where feasible, continued co-location, will serve to improve service delivery and the customer experience.
- 3.12 If approved as part of the City Council's capital programme the capital bid will enable the next stage of business analysis to be undertaken. This is expected to be both internal and external resource. The results of this exercise will be combined with further consideration of the current/alternative accommodation. A recommendation will be brought back to Cabinet and Full Council at the end of 2024.
- 3.13 Any recommendation will be cognisant of the issues addressed in this report and will ensure the liabilities associated with the current building are significantly reduced to safeguard future service delivery.

Next Steps

- 3.14 There are a number of workstreams / activities that need to be progressed asap to drive the project forward:
  - 3.14.1 Approval of the requested project capital funding for 24/25.
  - 3.14.2 Agreement of scope for Business Analyst workstream and onboarding as necessary.
  - 3.14.3 Ongoing investigation of potential for building and/or alternative sites including early budgetary advice, as well as delivery and funding options.
  - 3.14.4 Completion of business analysis and recommendations for future organisational delivery.
  - 3.14.5 New Governance Structure to be implemented, alongside new analysis workstream.
  - 3.14.6 Report and Recommendations to Council toward the end of 2024.



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Signed by (Director)

**Appendices:**

**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