

PLYMOUTH CITY COUNCIL

Subject: Redevelopment of the Civic Centre and Future
Accommodation Requirements

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 3 September 2013

Cabinet Member: Councillor Mark Lowry

CMT Members: Anthony Payne (Director for Place)
David Trussler (Interim Director for Corporate
Services)

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Ref:

Key Decision: Yes

Part: I

Purpose of the report:

- (1) To award the contract for the redevelopment of the Civic Centre and adjoining car park to the preferred bidder;
- (2) To agree where services and staff would be relocated, the financial resources and to ask the City Council to agree capital resources.

The Brilliant Co-operative Council Corporate Plan 2013/14 -2016/17:

The sale of the Civic Centre will contribute to the Pioneering Council by allowing greater flexibility and efficiency in delivering services; the Growing Council by facilitating the Arts Centre and creating a substantial number of jobs and training opportunities and the Confident Council by regenerating this site in a way in which all residents of Plymouth can be proud, with an internationally branded, top quality hotel.

The future locations of staff and services decanting from the Civic Centre will support the Pioneering and Caring priorities of the council by providing the essential customer services in the centre of the city. This moves the more process driven elements to other areas across the city reducing the cost of operating and limiting expenditure to essential sites thus freeing up finances for front line services and removing inequalities in access across public buildings.

Implications for Medium Term Financial Plan and Resource Implications: Including finance, human, IT and land:

The resolution of the Civic Centre site links to the Accommodation Transformation Strategy and forms part of the council's Medium Term Financial Plan. The annual revenue cost to the Council of the recommended solution can be contained within existing revenue budgets held for the Civic Centre. Full financial information is contained in the Part II report.

There will be a requirement for Capital investment in assets to achieve the occupancy levels required and further investment in ICT infrastructure to support decant and flexible operations in the future.

Other Implications: e.g. Child Poverty, Community Safety, Health and Safety and Risk Management:

Resolution of the Civic Centre site removes one of the biggest financial risks to the council. This has featured on the strategic risk register since the listing of the buildings in 2007. Doing nothing and maintaining the building in its current status represents a serious health and safety risk as significant investment is required to ensure structural stability and builds up increased liability for the future.

A number of opportunities have been created by seeking alternate ways of working resulting in opportunities for closer working with partners to improve community safety and deliver services more aligned to the needs of the city. The provision of more flexible ways of working across the city will improve service delivery and access to services across the city in the long term.

Equality and Diversity:

Has an Equality Impact Assessment been undertaken? Yes

Recommendations and Reasons for recommended action:

- I. To award the contract for the re-development of the Civic Centre to the party selected as Preferred Bidder following the public procurement exercise.

Reasons:

- i) To implement the conclusion of the public procurement process.
- ii) Sale of the site for redevelopment will:
 - a) Deliver economic, physical and social regeneration
 - b) Maintain the Council House for formal meetings and ceremonies

- c) Reduce the accommodation operating costs over a period of 25 years
- d) Remove the liability to maintain a grade II listed building

- 2. To agree the preferred locations for services to be redeployed to and the assets for redevelopment / lease, to support services decanting from the Civic Centre.

Reason: To progress lease negotiations and contract specification, procurement and award to meet the timelines required to support the sale of the Civic Centre programme.

- 3. To agree the revenue budgets and seek appropriate capital budgets required from Council to achieve decant of the Civic Centre as identified within the attached Part II report.

Reason: To progress all work streams required to decant from the Civic Centre.

- 4. To delegate authority to Cabinet Member for Finance to award contracts and approve leases within the agreed budget to redevelop the facilities identified in the attached Part II report.

Reason: There will be a number of contracts and leases to be approved which will be in excess of currently approved delegations of authority and will need to be approved quickly to support commercial decisions.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To award the contract to another contractor would not be lawful as it would contravene the procurement process undertaken.

Doing nothing and maintaining the building in its current status represents a serious health and safety risk as significant investment would be required by the council to ensure structural stability and build up increased liability for the future.

The delivery of a preferred bidder for the Civic Centre has provided the driver to identify alternate accommodation across the city. As such a large number of options have been identified and reduced to a small number of alternate options taking into account the operating cost envelope which needs to be maintained, the opportunities available on the market at this time and the requirements of the Council's services at the point of change.

The alternate options are still subject to lease negotiations and procurement competition to obtain the best value for money available but include utilising opportunities such as partnership working with some services moving to partner locations.

Published work / information:

Civic Centre & Accommodation Strategy Update 20 January 2009

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mgInternet/documents/s17553/Civic%20Centre%20Accomm%20Strat%20update.pdf>

Accommodation Strategy June 2009

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mgInternet/documents/s18978/Accommodation%20strategy.pdf>

Accommodation Strategy Report 10 August 2010

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mgInternet/documents/s25099/Accommodation%20Strategy%20Business%20Case.pdf>

Accommodation Strategy – Civic Centre Options 28 November 2006

<http://www.plymouth.gov.uk/mgInternet/documents/s10375/Accommodation%20Strategy%20-%20Civic%20Centre%20Options.pdf>

Background papers:

Title	Part I	Part II	Exemption Paragraph Number							
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Future of Civic Centre 23 August 2011		x			x					
Accommodation Strategy – Civic Centre 25 September 2007		x			x					
Equality Impact Assessment for Customers	x									
Equality Impact Assessment for Staff	x									

Sign off:

Fin	TPOCI31 4002SRA0 7-08-2013	Leg	18164 /ALT	Mon Off	TH22/ 08	HR		Assets	.	IT		Strat Proc	JK/S PU/C P/32 9/08 13
Originating SMT Member: n/a													
Has the Cabinet Member(s) agreed the content of the report? Yes													

ACCOMMODATION TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME / CONTRACT AWARD FOR THE REDEVELOPMENT OF THE CIVIC CENTRE

I. Background:

Since July 2004 work has been undertaken on options to secure a strategy for dealing with the City Council's administrative estate. Windsor House was secured as a long term strategic site, leaving the key remaining issue as the Civic Centre.

In June 2007 DCMS wrote to the Council confirming that the Civic Centre campus had been approved for listing as a Grade II listed building.

In January 2009 Cabinet approved the preparation of a joint report by the Council and English Heritage of a detailed brief summarising the repair and refurbishment specification to be adopted by the Council and/or a purchaser (investor/developer) in the event that the building was either reoccupied or disposed of by the Council. In addition approval was given for the Civic Centre campus to be formally marketed upon receipt of the refurbishment brief and to approve the Council as the lead procurer of the new Civic Offices.

Alongside of this Cabinet approved the principles of the Accommodation Strategy and its on-going development and for the progression of negotiations with our Local Strategic Partners (including Devon & Cornwall Constabulary and the Primary Care trust) about the opportunity of developing a co - location centre.

The key principles of the strategy were:

- The Council should agree to aim for stage 4 of the 'Without walls' evolutionary model, and a target for an overall 80% desk to employee ratio.
- All meeting rooms to be bookable centrally
- All furniture to be corporately owned, with existing furniture budgets centralised under Property & Economic Development
- A fundamental re-evaluation, in partnership with key suppliers of office furniture design and specification to take place
- Implement standard signs and corporate identity across all corporate buildings

The principles of the accommodation strategy, including co-location with health partners, have been installed in all the main corporate buildings via the first phase of the accommodation strategy delivery with the exception of the Civic Centre which was excluded due to the uncertainty around its future occupation by the Council.

In 2011 Cabinet agreed that the Council would continue to explore the opportunity for freehold disposal as part of the Competitive Dialogue process. Subject to this not being possible it approved a proposal for the redevelopment of the Civic Centre to be put out for European procurement via the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) with a view to the Council taking a lease-back of reduced space in a refurbished Civic Centre.

The report explained the position in terms of the Civic Centre which can be summarised as:

- A city centre site of 0.936 ha (2.31 acres) including a surface car park of approximately 0.29 ha (0.72 acres).
- The civic centre and council house was completed in the early 1960's opening in 1963 and was grade II listed in 2007.
- The building has a significant maintenance backlog.
- A feasibility study jointly commissioned with English Heritage was completed in April 2010 and concluded that the building could be sufficiently repaired to give it 50 years of life but at a significant cost.
- It also concluded that there were alternative uses for the building as either office, a hotel or residential use. These options are supported in planning terms.
- It houses 1008 staff on 13 floors in the tower.
- Accommodation for elected members, Council meetings & Civic Reception facilities are provided in the Council House.

2. The Issues:

There are a host of issues in relation to the Civic Centre building which means that the Council does not see its long term future linked to the building.

- The building provides sub-standard accommodation which has suffered from a lack of comprehensive capital investment. In particular:
 - Poor thermal insulation with singled glazed metal framed windows.
 - Only 3 lifts currently work and they are at the end of their useful life and beyond economic repair and need to be replaced.
 - The cladding on the outside of the building is failing which has led to the temporary works to protect those outside from falling masonry. Twice yearly scaling is carried out to remove loose elements and it is estimated that the panels will need to be completely replaced by no later than five years time.
 - The grade II listing placing restrictions on capital works that can be carried out and consequently increasing the cost of those works.
 - The building in its present state represents a serious health and safety risk as significant investment is required to ensure structural stability.
- The need for the present sized accommodation is diminishing and will diminish further in the future as new ways of working including home working are rolled out and the Council pursues an alternative service delivery model.
- The Council House will still have value to the Council for public meetings and ceremonies.
- The Council has limited capital to fund the repairs backlog and refurbishment of the building and such investment is not a priority for the Council.
- The Council has advice from Counsel that there are no grounds to mount a challenge to the listing. Current legal advice is that the position has not changed.

The present situation of our use and occupation of the building in its present state cannot, therefore, continue beyond the next 5 years in the absence of significant capital investment.

3. Objectives:

The August 2011 report and subsequent considerations have identified a number of objectives to be achieved.

- Deliver economic, physical and social regeneration.
- Provide a reduced level of office accommodation to reflect current and future working practices (flexible working, home-working etc.).
- Provide a city centre based 'first stop' for customers.
- Maintain (if practicable) the Council House for formal meetings and ceremonies.
- Reduce the accommodation operating costs.
- Remove the liability to maintain a grade II listed building.
- Improve the environmental credentials of the Civic Centre building.

4. Options

The August 2011 report set out five different options to achieve all or some of these objectives. It was not believed at the time, following a soft market test exercise, that the option of a freehold sale was achievable. These options were:

- a. Re-development of the site requiring consent for demolition.
- b. Carry out a full refurbishment of the buildings by the Council.
- c. A sale and leaseback of the buildings.
- d. A sale and leaseback of part of the buildings.
- e. Continue with the existing maintenance regime (the status quo option albeit limited to the life of the building in its current condition, estimated as 5 years at this time).

It was recommended then, that option d, the sale and leaseback of part of the civic centre tower would be the most cost-effective solution. In order to develop that solution, an Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU) procurement exercise was carried out with a view to the council taking a leaseback of reduced space in a refurbished building. In addition it was agreed that the Council would continue to explore the opportunity for freehold disposal.

5. Best Value Analysis

Officers have undertaken a Best Value analysis to confirm that the decision of Cabinet in August 2011 to seek to vacate the Civic Centre still provides best value for the Council. The results are shown in the Part II report.

6. Procurement Project:

A Contract Notice for the redevelopment was published in the OJEU on 08 September 2012.

Following a successful Bidder's Day held at Plymouth's Guildhall, the first stage of the procurement process commenced with the authority requiring interested parties to complete a Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). Applicants had to meet the minimum requirements for economic and financial standing (financial capabilities) and technical and professional capacity (relevant technical experience and resources) and had to meet the legal eligibility criteria, as set out in the PQQ.

The four highest scoring applicants were taken forward to the Invitation to Submit Solutions Stage (ISS). During this phase participants were required to engage in dialogue with the authority to develop their solutions and to enable them to be tested against the authority's requirements.

The ISS stage required participants to propose their solutions for the project by responding to specific questions detailed in the ISS questionnaire. Key questions related to cost to the council, job creation and environmental impact in addition to planning fit and the likelihood of obtaining listed building consent. Four companies were involved during this phase and the council continued to dialogue with the two highest scoring participants following evaluation of the ISS submissions. Two companies were then taken forward to the final tender stage.

The authority closed dialogue on the 15 March 2013 once it could identify one or more solutions capable of meeting its needs and issued the Call for Final Tenders on that date. Participants had until the 18 April to submit their final tender. They presented their solutions to senior councillors and officers on the 19 April 2013. The two submissions were then evaluated by officers against the published evaluation criteria and a Preferred Bidder has been identified. The Preferred Bidder is identified in the Part II report.

7. Solution Offered by the Preferred Bidder

The solution offered by the Preferred Bidder allows the Council to vacate the Civic Centre entirely, thus meeting the objective of removing liability for a Grade II Listed Building. The Civic Centre and car park will then be redeveloped into a high quality internationally branded hotel (4 star), feature apartments, restaurants, other food and beverage operations and, subject to grant funding by a third party, an Arts Centre, achieving the objective of physical regeneration of the site.

This solution will result in the creation of a significant number of jobs and training opportunities. The Preferred Bidder is committed to providing local jobs for local people and has begun establishing working relationships with local firms. They will create training courses for school leavers and unskilled workers to develop their skills and experience levels in addition to training courses for students, school leavers and the long term unemployed in connection with Plymouth City College's Employer Endorsement Scheme. All posts will be advertised with the 1000 Club, of which they are a member.

The company offers a long term commitment to the City of Plymouth with an estimated 128 permanent jobs along with apprenticeships, work placements and training courses in the Leisure & Tourism sector; all being made available directly through the Preferred Bidder once the redevelopment is complete and fully operational.

An estimated further 233 permanent jobs will also be available across the food/beverage, health and cultural sectors once the scheme is fully let and operational.

Additionally, 449 jobs will be generated through the Civic Centre project construction process alone. This achieves the objective of economic and social regeneration. The jobs created are a direct contribution to the Plan for Jobs. Project number 1 says "By creating a new partnership of public and private sector landowners we will accelerate, unblock and maximise local employment from the regeneration of the West End including the Theatre Royal, Pavilions and Civic Centre".

Once refurbishment has finished, the public space surrounding the building will experience all the usual benefits of major investment in a thirteen floor city centre development. Activity at street level from the new uses will increase significantly. The design solutions by the architects will generate many more leisure-orientated trips to this area of the city, which is likely to become a destination or hub with its own identity. Many more leisure-orientated visitors will be attracted to the city generally, and they will congregate here and be ideally positioned for walking to nearby shops or to the Hoe as its world-famous visitor attraction. The new uses will attract all ages, business travellers and families, from home and abroad.

The proposal involves the transfer of the freehold interest in the Civic Centre and its rear car park (not the Council House) to the Preferred Bidder at nil consideration. The company will then apply for planning permission and listed building consent to re-develop the property. Once planning permission is achieved there is a legally binding development obligation on the developer to complete the re-development within 2 years. It will not be possible for the developer to "sit on his hands" and land-bank the property. It is anticipated that contracts will be signed this year, once the funders have completed all usual due diligence and the contract will only be conditional on obtaining planning consent. The developer will be under a legally binding obligation to diligently pursue the planning application.

The benefits to the Council of this proposal include the elimination of one of its most significant financial risks in terms of the repair costs anticipated for the Civic Centre; the creation of significant numbers of jobs and training opportunities along with the economic regeneration benefits of having an internationally branded, high class hotel in the centre of the city.

The Council House will be retained meeting the objective of its continued use for civic purposes.

The redevelopment will also meet the objective of improving the environmental credentials for the Civic Centre by improving its rating from E to B.

8. Evaluation

Submissions were evaluated using the criteria listed in table 2 overleaf.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Ref	Issue	Available Score	Weighting	%age of overall score
Pass/Fail Questions				
A1.1	Purchase of Freehold			
A1.2	Solution for Provision of Office Accommodation (specification)			
A1.3	A1.3 Capital Contribution			
A1.4	A1.4 Financial Guarantee			
A1.5	English Heritage			
A1.6	Form of Lease to Council			
Scored Questions				
<u>Technical Proposals</u>				9%
BI.1	Quantum of Leaseback	10	9%	
<u>Contractual</u>				3%
CI.1	The Contract	10	3%	
<u>Financial Proposals</u>				45%
DI.1	Financial Proposal	10	43%	
DI.2	Capital Contributions	10	2%	
<u>Deliverability</u>				17%
EI.1	Funding/Occupiers/Surveys/ Capacity/Vibrancy of proposal	10	12%	
EI.2	Planning	10	5%	
<u>Environmental Factors</u>				11%
FI.1	Energy Performance	10	1%	
FI.2	Carbon Emission	10	10%	
<u>Economic Factors</u>				15%
GI.1(i)	Number of Jobs	10	8%	
GI.1(ii)	Clear statement re job creation	10	3%	
GI.1(iii)	How will jobs be created?	10	4%	
TOTAL		110	100%	100%

The Preferred Bidder scored a total of 83%

The second placed bidder scored a total of 74%

9. Current Position Post Procurement Exercise

The outcome of the procurement exercise is a freehold disposal with no requirement for the council to leaseback space. This allows the council to utilize the current market conditions to procure a better financial deal to meet its space requirements with a revised estimated cost over 25 years as follows as detailed in the Part 11 report.

10. Route to Decant

In anticipation of the preferred bidder being selected the Accommodation Transformation Programme commenced work on the potential decant of the Civic Centre based largely upon the concept of operations used to deliver the Corporate Accommodation Strategy. A Senior Responsible Officer and Programme Manager were appointed at the start of April 2013 to deliver a coordinated delivery of the Civic Decant with a cogent solution for the operational accommodation to meet the needs of the Council's Transformation Programme.

The team sought to achieve a realistic delivery time table in consultation with the preferred bidder for the Civic Centre and equitable operating costs. The solution needed to deliver a 'Front of House' where the services to the public could be delivered within the city centre (an objective) and provide sufficient accommodation to meet the needs of the current occupation levels of the Civic Centre on a hot desking ratio of no greater than 8:10 at this time, in other locations across the city. This effectively reduces the accommodation footprint by 7% in the first instance. Given the changing nature of local authority finances the delivery of a flexible operating base with flexible infrastructure and ICT will be essential to service provision as Plymouth moves into the future. The remaining objectives of reducing accommodation levels and operating costs over 25 years will be achieved in this way.

11. Time Table

The current proposed timeline has the Council vacating the Civic Centre by November 2014 with vacant possession being provided in December 2014 / January 2015. This is a timeline which the Council is keen to achieve. The current programme for the Preferred Bidder shows that planning permission will be sought April – August 2014. To achieve the vacant possession date work will need to be commenced and leases agreed on a number of properties prior to planning permission being granted for the Civic Centre. This exposes the council to the risk and associated wasted costs in the event that planning approval is not obtained. In mitigation, significant dialogue between the developer, planning and English Heritage to gain accord on the route forward has been completed and thus this risk is seen as low.

The Accommodation Transformation Programme will seek to de-risk the impact on service delivery by decanting the civic in a phased approach up to December 2014 taking advantage of the delivery of buildings early and any partnering opportunities which may present themselves. To achieve this will require significant coordinated effort across all departments.

12. The Approach

When the decision was taken in 2011 to commence dialogue with the market the authority had understood that the cost to refurbish the Civic Centre was significant and outside the authorities' ability to finance. It also understood that there was likely to be a little interest in the outright purchase of the building given the state of the market, the results of a soft market testing exercise and the condition of the building. Further to this the authority would potentially need to lease back a number of floors in order to make the commercial deal possible, deliver a solution to the building and maintain its iconic status within the city; whilst using the development to help stimulate the provision of jobs, economic activity and regeneration in the city. The dialogue process delivered a solution for the whole building surpassing the authority's expectations and totally achieving the aims originally set in 2011.

Since the decision in 2011 and the outcome in 2013 the financial markets have changed alongside the political landscape and the availability of funding for local authorities. With the city commencing a whole scale transformation programme, and the future shape and structure of the organisation at this time unknown, the delivery of an accommodation infrastructure to support service delivery must be a flexible one to meet the needs of the business both now and in the medium term.

A number of options were investigated to deliver a coordinated solution to the civic centre into a solution which would add value to the transformation programme and the changing nature of the operations of Plymouth City Council. Clearly with the physical condition of the Civic Centre, the option to do nothing does not exist and the need to remove the asset liability remains as does the need to create jobs, economic activity and regeneration of an iconic landmark within the city. As such the options investigated were as follows:

- Option A Refurbish the current Civic Centre
- Option B Provide a whole scale New Building to replace the current Civic Centre
- Option C Provide a number of refurbished buildings across the city to replace capacity
- Option D Provide a flexible operating base in the medium term

Option A

Option A looked at remaining in the Civic Centre with it being refurbished by Plymouth City Council in the immediate future. This option had already been looked at in 2011 to form the original decision to commence competitive dialogue. As discussed earlier, the costs of this had been calculated however in order maintain a rational approach, it was decided that this should be tested again. In doing so with a group of independent Professional Quantity Surveyors the investigation arrived at a cost detailed in the Part II report. This level of funding on maintaining business as usual was not supported and the option was rejected.

Option B

Option B looked to provide a whole scale new building to accommodate the staff, services and technology currently housed within the Civic Centre. The costs based upon this option are detailed in the Part II report. This did not include the cost of site assembly or resource to conduct decant. Further to this the time line to achieve site assembly and delivery would have a negative impact upon the potential solution for the Civic Centre. Although sites were available, the cost to provide a building which would be excessive in terms of size given potential operating models was not seen as a sound investment in business as usual at this time and as such this option was rejected.

Option C

Option C looked to accommodate staff in multiple locations across the city investing in assets largely owned by the authority. However due to the nature of current service provision and the need to maintain a city centre presence this would necessitate heavy investment in an asset that the authority did not own. It would also require significant investment in ICT infrastructure, disruption to services prior to transformation and the termination of a number of commercial leases that the city has with partners providing income to the city. This option was also rejected given the size of the investment in assets that were not owned by PCC and did not provide the long term solution given the changing nature of the business as a whole.

Option D

Option D sought to accommodate staff in leased accommodation and a number of unoccupied commercial properties taking advantage of current market conditions whilst the authority completes its transformation over the next five years altering its shape, size, and structure and operating model accordingly. This will allow the authority to develop its strategy for wider asset rationalisation within its transformation programme alongside its partners desire to do the same achieving economies of scale across the board. The cost to achieve this is detailed in the Part II report with an ongoing revenue support requirement which is subject to further review. The option of remaining in the Civic Centre during this five year period was discounted due to the negative impact on the proposed solution for the Civic Centre and the anticipated repair costs over that period of 5 years.

Recommended Option

Option D is the recommended option delivering an operating base for the city based upon a mixture of leased and owned assets which remain flexible in terms of size to allow the Council to adapt to the changing nature of service delivery across the city and the changes in public sector financing.

The infrastructure will be delivered over the next 18 months decanting staff and services as elements become available with the final element being the customer facing areas which will decant in the latter quarter of 2014. The programme will achieve an 8:10 hot desking ratio and will seek to compress to 6:10 alongside the delivery of technological solutions to allow mobile working to take place. The expectation is that approx. 290 staff will be deemed mobile and as such will have ICT solutions to meet their needs. The remaining staff will be deemed flexible unless flagged for specific permanent desks. This arrangement will be delivered across the estate with all staff from the CEO down working in this way.

This provides the smallest operating cost at this time. This information is likely to change as the lease negotiations continue in an attempt to gain the most beneficial offer possible for the authority. As a result of this the paper seeks to have the delegated authority to agree the leases to be given to Cabinet Member for Finance in consultation with the Director of Corporate Resources.

The solution allows the public to have direct access to services in the city centre through the provision of a 'Front of house' through a commercial property along the same lines as a high street bank would provide. A preferred solution is being pursued and seen as appropriate, again these are subject to lease negotiations. The support elements are then located in a number of buildings which are either owned by the authority or leased. The aim was to cause minimal disruption to services and to sustain the economic links between the 1000 staff and the city centre.

13. Capital Requirements

The capital requirements to achieve the programme are set out in the Part II report. This is spread across a large number of projects within ICT and the building environment. Revenue Requirements

Further to the capital requirements to deliver this programme of works, there will be a number of revenue costs immediately associated with decant of the Civic Centre. These are detailed in the Part II report.

14. Co-operative Scrutiny Board

The Co-operative Scrutiny Board considered this matter on 21 August 2013 and endorsed the recommendations set out in this report. The minute of the Board is attached.