

Report subject	Estates and Accommodation - BCP Civic Space
Meeting date	24 November 2021
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	The creation of the BCP Council Civic Centre is part of the first phase in the council's Estates and Accommodation Strategy, which aims to establish a 'fit for purpose' corporate estate that can effectively support council's services and the delivery of its priorities. The November 2020 Estates & Accommodation Cabinet Report focussed on the remodelling of the officer accommodation areas of the former town hall complex as a priority. It also proposed setting up a Members' Working Group to consider and lead on the development of the Civic accommodation, as a subsequent phase. A Members Working Group was established in early 2021, to identify the needs of the civic space in the BCP Council Civic Centre. This report responds to the working group's considerations and proposes additional investment in the BCP Council Civic Centre to ensure that the building provides fit for purpose accommodation to support the council's democratic processes as well as the other functions that are typically delivered from the building's civic spaces. Works would include improved accessibility and the adoption of technology solutions that support transparency and wider engagement in the council's decision making. Whilst the original town hall presents challenges in terms of making changes or adaptations to the building's heritage features, a pragmatic and prudent approach to cost has been taken to ensure value for money
Recommendations	It is RECOMMENDED that Cabinet: a) Approves the remodelling of the BCP Civic Space as outlined in this report b) Approves the Phase 1 project budget set out in Appendix 3 of £1.067 million, of which £0.611 million will be funded from prudential borrowing, for onward recommendation to Council c) Authorises the commencement of the procurement process and delegates authority to award contracts to

	implement the remodelling project to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, and Corporate Director Resources, in accordance with delegated authorities and the council's financial regulations
Reason for recommendations	To approve the budget and procurement approach required to successfully remodel the civic space in BCP Council Civic Centre.
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Drew Mellor, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Transformation
Corporate Director	Julian Osgathorpe, Corporate Director Resources
Report Authors	Matti Raudsepp, Director of Customer and Business Delivery
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Decision and Recommendation

Background

1. In November 2020 Cabinet approved the budget to deliver Phase 1 of the Council's Estates and Accommodation strategy. It proposed the remodelling of the service accommodation as a priority, in order to move the project forward, and then to establish a Members Working Group to lead on the development of the Civic accommodation, as a subsequent phase of the project. The proposed impact of civic accommodation remodelling on the Medium Term Financial Plan was consequently not known at the outset of the wider project, although the budget approved in November 2020 included an amount to remodel the current Citizens' Advice Bureau area, potentially to house the Registrars.
2. This followed the outcome of the Cabinet report in Feb 2020 which recommended the refurbishment of Bournemouth Town Hall complex as the preferred approach to delivering a single BCP Council Civic Centre and the outcome of the organisational design process reported to Cabinet in November 2019.
3. As a consequence of the unprecedented situation created by the pandemic on the council's activities, Cabinet agreed in June 2020 to accelerate the transition of staff from Christchurch and Poole to the new BCP Civic Centre, and thereby release the legacy buildings for repurposing as soon as possible. It was also agreed that a more pragmatic and scaled back approach would be taken to the refurbishment of the new civic centre, reflecting the financial implications the council was dealing with as a result of the pandemic.
4. In order to progress the decisions around the future of the council's wider estate, an Asset Management Plan is also being developed. This piece of work will inform subsequent stages of the Estates and Accommodation project, and in

particular the identification of surplus assets and the requirements relating to the delivery of the Hub and Spoke objectives of the project as a whole.

5. A Cabinet report relating to the Poole Civic Centre was considered by Cabinet in October 2021. This proposed that a vertical slice of the Poole Civic Centre is retained as a civic footprint in Poole and as the home for the Poole Mayoralty. The report also outlined that the Poole Civic Centre vertical slice would be an appropriate location for the Coroners service, which is currently based in Bournemouth Town Hall. The relocation of the Coroners' service will provide greater flexibility within the BCP Civic Centre, including the potential for increased space for public participation in council decision making, as well as potential new income generation opportunities.

BCP Civic Space - Requirements

6. The Members Working Group was established in early 2021 to understand the requirements of the civic space. The Members Working Group comprised Cllr Filer (Chair), Cllr Mellor, Cllr Butler and Cllr Andrews.
7. The BCP civic space is ground and first floors of the BCP Council Civic Centre sometimes referred to as the West Wing. The space is used for civic purposes, including council meetings, board, committee and panel meetings, school appeals and elections. It is a popular venue for weddings and civic partnerships and is used by external organisations for meetings. It also provides accommodation for the Bournemouth Charter Trustees including the Bournemouth Mayoralty. It is also currently the home to the Coroners Service. Please see Appendix 1 for outline of the current BCP Civic Space area.
8. The BCP civic space is part of an historic building of which parts are Listed. At the heart of the current complex of buildings is the Mont Dore (Historic England call the building the Mont Dore) Hotel built between 1881 and 1885 to the designs of Alfred Bedborough. Originally one of the grandest hotels in Bournemouth the building was purchased in 1921 as the town hall, with the council chamber and related accommodation constructed as a separate block in 1930. In 1990 the modern office accommodation block (known as the Extension) was added. The Town Hall was listed grade II number 1389612 in December 2001. The original hotel is said to have been designed in a neo classical style, with the council chamber addition also classical in form.
9. The Members Working Group specified the following key requirements from the civic space:
 - a. Ensure the civic space is easily accessible to the public
 - b. Ensure that the Council Chamber is fit for purpose, in particular to provide sufficient capacity in order to accommodate all elected members
 - c. Ensure that the civic areas comply with fire safety regulations
 - d. Increase the maximum occupants allowed in the civic area by improving fire escape provisions
 - e. Provide unisex toilets
 - f. Provide baby changing areas
 - g. Civic space to be secure and safe – to allow for 24/7 and weekend working

- h. Provide a functional space for all members / large council meetings
 - i. Ensure rooms are maintained at appropriate temperatures
 - j. Ensure all rooms have adequate acoustics / sound proofing
 - k. Efficient and up-to-date technology in the Council Chamber
 - l. Create a mix of flexible meeting rooms, ie formal meeting rooms, breakout areas, that are bookable and non-bookable
 - m. Ensure adequate charging points available for phones and laptops
 - n. Ensure clear signage to guide the public in civic space
 - o. Ensure civic space has a similar standard of working environment as rest of Town Hall
10. There has been engagement with Bournemouth Charter Trustees to understand their requirements from the BCP Civic space. There has also been engagement with the Legal and Democratic team and Registrars team to ensure their needs from this space have been captured and will be met.
 11. The proposed requirement for the large functional space is so that large council meetings, such as planning appeals, or functions, can be held in the BCP Civic Space. As a meeting space, the space should fit 80 - 100 members of public in row seating and a horseshoe table committee area for up to 20 - 25 officers and councillors. The room should include technology and screens for the public to view presentations and an audio/conference system capable of broadcasting to residents and stakeholders via internet channels. It is also proposed for the room to have partition doors so that it could be split into 4 - 6 rooms of different sizes -1 larger one and smaller rooms for waiting rooms.
 12. Remodelling the BCP civic centre provides an opportunity to expand the weddings and functions offering to attract more business and increase income. Each year over 2000 ceremonies are conducted across BCP of which 500 are at the Bournemouth Town Hall. Weddings bring in £700k income into the council. Improvements to the civic space accommodation will allow us to increase our income for ceremonies and functions.

BCP Civic Space - Design

13. Space in the BCP Civic Centre will become available following the relocation of the Coroners' service; relocating the Citizens Advice Team to the BCP Civic Extension; repurposing the mayoress' parlour and using meeting rooms, such as the Leaders office, flexibly.
14. It is proposed that the space vacated by the Citizens Advice team (currently on the lower ground floor of the west wing) is used to relocate the Registrars' team. This provides registrars with a location which has direct access to the public from the outside. The opportunity exists to create further multifunctional rooms which can be used for council meetings, officer meetings, community space, function rooms for weddings and ceremonies. Further function rooms will give us the opportunity to generate additional income. Please see Appendix 2 for proposed layout.

15. An external consultant was engaged to advise on the most effective way in which to address the requirements for the building within the constraints of its heritage listing. They proposed how best to create a large meeting space in the west wing. It was felt that the area the coroners currently occupy would be best fit for this purpose. Please see Appendix 2 for proposed location.
16. Advice was also given on how best to make the civic space more accessible and improve fire escape provisions. The consultant proposed changes in six key areas which are indicated on the layout in Appendix 2:
 - Area One, Main corridor lift and access - This improves disabled access from the main reception lobby through the main ground floor corridor towards the Mayor's Parlour, Tregonwell Room, Willows Room and ultimately towards the Council Chamber
 - Area Two, Lift to Coroner's Court - This improves disabled wheelchair access from the main ground floor corridor to the ground floor accommodation below the Council Chamber currently occupied by the Coroners Court.
 - Area Three, Main Entrance - This improves disabled wheelchair access to the main front entrance into the Town Hall. Currently the only disabled access to the reception lobby is either to come into the back of the Town Hall through the goods entrance, or to enter via a basement entrance on the main elevation.
 - Area Four, Lift to first floor – This improves accessibility from the reception lobby to the first floor Council Chamber by extending the current lift.
 - Area Five, Fire Escape - This creates a purpose built escape staircase on the side elevation of the Council Chamber block, accessed through what are currently windows at first floor and ground floor. This will increase the number of occupants allowed in the civic space
 - Area Six, Willows Room Escape – This creates a fire escape by altering one of the bay windows to form a fire door with a landing externally. This will increase the number of occupants allowed in the civic space
17. By undertaking the improvements to accessibility (areas one to four) people with disabilities will have the same independent access to the west wing as any other member of the public would. If the accessibility modifications are not undertaken, the areas remain accessible but by circuitous routes and in some areas people will need to get assistance.
18. A heritage consultant was engaged regarding the proposed changes to the Council Chamber and any changes impacting the listed nature of the building.
19. For the Council Chamber, the works proposed include building roll away seating to ensure seating for all seventy four councillors on the floor of the Council Chamber; reupholstering seating; improving desks –including microphones, laptop stands, charging points (power and data) ; installing three screens (2 in chambers, 1 in public gallery); wired conferencing system, integrated camera tracking system, audio system including speakers and microphones, live streaming & recording ability and Microsoft Teams integration; redecoration.
20. For HMS Phoebe and other key meeting rooms, the works proposed include installing appropriate technology and redecoration.

21. The proposed works includes the introduction or update to the heating, air cooling, air extraction system in the west wing, including the Council Chamber and new large meeting room. A consultant will be engaged to ensure there is appropriate air extraction in the west wing so it complies with COVID guidelines when it comes to ventilation.
22. Additionally, the toilets and baby change areas will be refreshed and the decoration in the west wing will be of a similar standard to the rest of the remodelled civic centre.

Delivery Strategy

23. It is proposed to deliver the remodelling of the BCP Civic Space in two key phases. Each phase will be subject to a separate planning application.
24. Phase 1 will focus on the areas of work that need to be prioritised and can be undertaken with the Coroners' service in situ as they would be low impact regarding noise. Phase 1 will include making the Council Chamber fit for purpose with suitable seating, updated ventilation and appropriate technology installed for hybrid meetings. Phase 1 will also include installing screens and redecoration in key meeting rooms (HMS Phoebe, Royal Hants, Room 50, Tregonwell and room 47). This will ensure that full and/or hybrid Council meetings can commence in the BCP civic centre as soon as possible. A heritage consultant has been engaged regarding the Phase 1 plans and significant progress has been made with a view to ensuring plans will receive the necessary approvals.
25. Phase 2 would include significant structural works such as the accessibility and fire escape works, creation of large meeting space and remodelling of the Lower Ground area for registrars. Phase 2 would also include floor replacement, toilet and kitchen refurbishment.
26. Initial design commenced in spring 2021 and listed building consent for Phase 1 will be applied for following approval of this Cabinet report. It is the intention that Phase 1 will be completed by end of May 2022 so that Council committee meetings, currently taking place in Poole Civic can operate from BCP Civic from this time (this will enable Poole Civic Centre to close for remodelling works from June 2022).
27. Feasibility work will need to be undertaken for Phase 2 in which the proposed structural works are explored in more detail and greater certainty on cost established. A further report will then be submitted to Cabinet for consideration of the feasibility work and funding for phase 2. The impact of remodelling works on Council activity in the space, including weddings and functions, would need to be considered. It is likely that the civic space will need to be closed for periods of time while the build work is underway.
28. The Bournemouth Charter Trustees and service users will continue to be engaged with to work through transition and interim arrangements while the space is being remodelled.

Delivery Budget

29. The budget requirement for the delivery of Phase 1 of the BCP Civic space improvements is £1.067 million, which includes feasibility funding for Phase 2 and a 17.5% contingency. The budget breakdown is set out in Appendix 3. The uncertainty that accompanies a project of this scale and complexity, within the context of a currently volatile construction market, means that a 17.5% contingency is considered appropriate.
30. A number of assumptions have been identified in order to build the project budget, and these are summarised as follows:
- a. The budget is largely based on estimates rather than tender costs
 - b. Asbestos surveys have been completed but only to a non-invasive level at this stage. More detailed survey work may identify additional costs in due course
 - c. The emphasis is on reuse of suitable office furniture and equipment in order to limit refurbishment costs
 - d. The emphasis is to redecorate key rooms and make good those with significant alterations
 - e. The costs for technology (screens and connectivity) in the key meeting rooms was included in the Nov 2020 budget and is therefore excluded from this budget request.
31. The budget can be most clearly understood in terms of the following breakdown:
- a. Updates to seating in Council Chamber
 - b. Installation of technology to key meeting rooms (including Council Chamber)
 - c. Update air ventilation/heating system in Council Chamber
 - d. Redecoration and refurbishment costs
 - e. Feasibility for Phase 2
32. It is considered that the approach being adopted is proportionate and represents value for money for the council. A pragmatic approach has been taken with remodelling the civic space.

Recommended procurement process

33. In order to deliver the BCP civic space as quickly as possible a combination of in-house and externally sourced design and professional skills capability will be used. This ensures that the various strands of the project can be developed concurrently which will assist in managing the interdependencies that exist within the project, and also represents the best use of internal resource.
34. With regard to the build elements of the project these will be procured in line with the council's normal procurement guidelines, and the most appropriate approach and breakdown of works will be identified once the outcome of the design phase is known.

Next steps

35. Subject to the approval of the recommendations contained in this report the focus will be on Phase 1 of the design and delivery of the BCP civic space.
36. A planning application will be prepared and submitted for Phase 1 works.
37. Feasibility work will be undertaken for Phase 2
38. Procurement of key suppliers will commence.

Summary of financial implications

39. The total cost of remodelling works for Phase 1 is estimated at £1.067 million, including 17.5% contingency. Table below provides a high-level indicative outline of planned spend, based on estimated delivery timeline. Estimated spend at this stage is based on high level desktop estimates only. Both the estimates and delivery timeline will need to be revised as costs and plans are firmed up. The £1.067 million estimated spend consists of £0.611 million (including 17.5% contingency) of planned works that could be capitalised in accordance with CIPFA accounting standards. These include new ICT investment in the council chamber and Phoebe room, new air ventilation and heating in council chamber as well as new furnishings and windows overhaul. One-off revenue spend of £0.456 million includes reupholstery of furniture, redecoration and £50k feasibility budget for future phases of works that cannot be capitalised.
40. It is proposed that the capital expenditure of £0.611 million is funded from additional prudential borrowing at 3% interest rate (council's low risk invest to save framework rate) over the life of each 'asset component' (e.g. 25 years for new air ventilation and heating, 5 years for ICT investment). This results in a blended overall interest cost of borrowing of £0.152 million on new prudential borrowing of £0.611 million.
41. The table below summarises the financial implications in absolute terms of the planned investment over the council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). This table contains indicative values only. There will likely be further other ongoing revenue budget impacts from the investment (e.g. additional repairs and maintenance, lighting, offset by additional income from room hire) which have not yet been costed.

	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	> MTFP £000	total £000
Planned investment								
Capital expenditure	470	141	0	0	0	0	0	611
One-off revenue expenditure		456	0	0	0	0	0	456
Planned investment	470	597	0	0	0	0	0	1067
Revenue impact of funding for planned investment								
One-off revenue expenditure	0	456	0	0	0	0	0	456
Repayment of borrowing principal	0	60	70	70	70	70	273	611
Repayment of borrowing interest	4	11	11	11	11	11	94	152
Revenue budget impact	4	527	80	80	80	80	367	1219

42. In producing the estimates for the original Estates and Accommodation budgets for the development of the BCP Civic Centre a Transformation saving of £1.031m for 2022/23 was declared, increasing to £1.085m in 2023/24. By agreeing to the proposals for the BCP Civic Space these savings will be reduced by £527k in 2022/23, and by an ongoing £80k pa from 2023/4.
43. The Bournemouth Charter Trustees contribution is £17,350pa. (20/21). This is existing revenue income already assumed within the budgets.

Financial risks

44. There is significant uncertainty around high level cost estimates at this time.
45. Contingency will be provided for at 17.5% of estimated costs (which may increase when more detailed investigation and design work is completed).
46. It is recommended that Council is provided with full details of planned works – in particular to understand how the additional 'West Wing' works complement existing remodelling works already underway at the site.
47. Consideration should be given towards the timing of planned investment and impact on costs. The council's capital programme and revenue budgets are already seeing significant new cost pressures from post Brexit and Covid market conditions at this time. There is potential for 'market correction' to have occurred during the timeline of the planned BCP Civic Centre additional works, but no guarantee.
48. The potential to generate additional annual net revenue income from the investment (for example public room hire) should also be understood and factored into the MTFP if material. Similarly additional costs of annual maintenance, cleaning, repair and other building related costs (particularly with regard to the new meeting space) will need to be properly costed and understood.
49. Should Council approve the use of Prudential borrowing for this project, it would use some of the £212 million additional borrowing headroom within our prudential indicators (approved by Council September 2021), further to the approved financial strategy supporting the MTFP.

VAT

50. The proposed project has been reviewed from VAT perspective and no issues has been identified. Any VAT the Council incurs will be fully recoverable subject to receiving a valid VAT invoice.

Value for Money

51. This represents additional investment in the BCP Council Civic Centre to ensure that there is a consistent approach to remodelling works across the campus, and that the Town Hall building is coherent in its look and feel.
52. The proposals ensure that the Civic Centre will provide fit for purpose spaces for council meetings and public functions, including the ability to run hybrid meetings and importantly for the building to be accessible to all.
53. As with the remodelling works in the Extension, a pragmatic and prudent approach to cost has been taken.

Summary of legal implications

54. The Council has the power to enter into contracts pursuant to section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. The council will undertake the procurement in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and subject to any relevant implications arising from the UK's transition from the jurisdiction of the European Union on 31st December 2020.

Summary of human resources implications

55. There are no human resources implications arising from this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

56. The introduction of new ways of working to accompany the outcomes of the Estates and Accommodation Project will reduce travel, with most staff spreading their working time across home and office locations. Investment made in remote working technology as a result of the Covid 19 pandemic has already demonstrated the potential in this regard, and we know following recent staff surveys that the workforce is overwhelmingly enthusiastic about working differently.
57. The creation of an Interim Travel Plan is being progressed to support the project and it will identify measures to both encourage positive changes in travel behaviour and to discourage unnecessary travel both to/from work and whilst performing duties related to work.

Summary of public health implications

58. A consultant will be engaged to ensure there is appropriate air extraction in the west wing so it complies with COVID guidelines when it comes to ventilation.

Summary of equality implications

59. An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) is attached at Appendix 4

Background papers

Cabinet, 13 November 2019

Cabinet, 12 February 2020

Cabinet, 24 June 2020

Cabinet, November 2020

Cabinet, 27 October 2021

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Current layout of BCP civic space

Appendix 2 – Proposed layout of BCP civic space

Appendix 3 – Budget

Appendix 4 – EIA