

RESOURCES AND SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 NOVEMBER 2020

REPORT OF THE DEPUTY LEADER, (PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR CORPORATE FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE)

A.1 UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF OFFICE TRANSFORMATION MEASURES

(Report prepared by Andy White)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To update the Committee on the progress of works to office buildings. Complimentary reports will be made in relation to IT, customer and human resources initiatives within the programme.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In December 2016 Cabinet approved a proposal to make major changes to the Council's office services and accommodation. In September 2017 the Chief Executive signed off a detailed business case for a package of measures aimed at four main areas of modernisation:

1. Customer Services
2. Information Technology
3. Working methods and staff wellbeing
4. Office buildings.

This report focusses on the progress of works to office buildings. Complimentary reports will be made in relation to IT, customer service and human resources initiatives within the programme.

Progress on office facilities is as follows:

Clay Hall	Freehold disposal	Fully complete
Westleigh House	Demolition and creation of car park	Fully Complete
Barnes House	Additional floor and link	Fully Complete
Pier Avenue Offices	Refurbishment	Fully Complete
Northbourne Rd Depot	Additional part floor	Fully Complete
Town Hall	Refurbishment/remodelling	Around 50% Complete
Alexandra Gardens	Repair storage building	Not commenced
Mill Lane Depot	Convert former business units	Not commenced
Weeley site	Freehold disposal	Negotiations ongoing

RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee notes the progress of works to the office buildings and determines whether it has any comments or recommendations it wishes to put forward the relevant Portfolio Holder or Cabinet.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

The project will contribute to the following corporate priorities:

Delivering High Quality Services

- 24 hour a day digital services – My Tending
- Modern, high quality buildings and facilities for customers and staff
- Carbon Neutral by 2030

Community Leadership Through Partnerships

- Joined up public services for the benefit of our residents and businesses

Strong Finances and Governance

- Balanced annual budget
- Use assets to support priorities

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK

Finance and other resources

Capital expenditure identified for 2020/1 amounts to £355,100. Expenditure completed amounts to £57,528 at September 2020. This leaves £297,572 for work during the remainder of the financial year. Commitments to date are somewhat ahead of expenditure reported. It is anticipated that the project overall can be completed in line with the budget.

Anticipated Capital receipts for disposal of the Weeley site will need to be downgraded and it is unlikely that the project will therefore be self-funding overall in Capital terms. Work is ongoing to maximise benefits to be released from the disposal including the consideration of housing options.

Risk

Listed building application for work to the Committee Room was deferred by the planning Committee. Work is ongoing in preparing a further submission with the objective of securing the approval.

The progress of work at the Town Hall has been affected by some factors that emerged during the course of the project which have caused some elements of delay and additional cost. Some value engineering at later stages may be required in order to control costs.

LEGAL

In coming to decisions in relation to management of assets, the Council must act in accordance with its statutory duties and responsibilities. Under case law following Section 120 of Local Government Act 1972, the Council is obliged to ensure that the management of its assets are for the benefit of the district.

Section 120(1) of Local Government Act 1972 provides for the Council to acquire land either within or outside the District for any purpose within that or any other Act or for the benefit, improvement or development of the area.

Section 123(1) Local Government Act 1972 indicates that, a local authority may dispose of land held by it in any way it wishes so long as (section 123 (2)) the land is disposed for a consideration not less than the best that can reasonably be obtained.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Health Inequalities / Area or Ward affected / Consultation/Public Engagement/Carbon Neutrality.

Although not currently operating, the Facility at Pier avenue includes space for use by partner organisations to work from and with TDC services aimed at promoting activities pertinent to reduction in crime and disorder and reducing health inequality.

Each of the public sites is designed to promote accessibility, within the constraints of the structures as applicable.

New structures have been designed to have high insulation levels and where new heating has been installed these are air source heat pumps. The reduced extent of

accommodation will have a simple, proportionate effect on carbon emissions.

Area or Ward Affected

All Wards

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION

BACKGROUND

In December 2016 Cabinet approved a proposal to make major changes to the Council’s working methods and office accommodation. In September 2017 the Chief Executive signed off a detailed business case for a package of measures aimed at four main areas of modernisation:

1. Customer Services
2. Information Technology
3. Working methods and staff wellbeing
4. Office buildings.

The overall aim of the package is to modernise our working practices to make them more flexible and responsive and at the same time realise efficiencies.

CURRENT POSITION

This report focusses on the progress of works to office buildings. Complimentary reports will be made in relation to IT, customer service and human resources initiatives within the programme. Progress on office facilities is as follows:

Clay Hall	Freehold disposal	Fully complete
The site has been sold and has been cleared and redeveloped as a range of modern bungalows		
Westleigh House	Demolition and creation of car park	Fully Complete
A new car park has been created increasing town centre capacity and potentially facilitating future development		
Barnes House	Additional floor and link	Fully Complete
Additional office accommodation has been added and the link provides additional meeting and interview rooms, first floor accessibility and internal fire escape.		
Pier Avenue Offices	Refurbishment	Fully Complete
A new reception and remodelling maximises the use of space, provides visitor accessible lavatory and revised interview rooms. A new roof and insulation is included to address maintenance and insulation issues.		
Northbourne Rd Depot	Additional part floor	Fully Complete
A new insulated roof replaces an aged asbestos one and office space has been created in the roof void		
Town Hall	Refurbishment/remodelling	Around 50% Complete
Removal of smaller offices has created brighter modern spaces. Parallel work is being carried out to address some maintenance and fire precaution issues. Lavatories have been refurbished including provision of additional female facilities. Work in the south wing is broadly complete (except the Committee Room) at the time of writing. Plans are being detailed to relocate staff from the North wing in order to facilitate further phases of work.		
Alexandra Gardens	Repair storage building	Not commenced

To refit a storage building for theatre use to mitigate the storage in the Town Hall used to increase lavatory capacity.		
Mill Lane Depot	Convert former business units	Not commenced
Proposed rationalisation and refurbishment to address repair issues and to facilitate use by the waste team.		
Weeley site	Freehold disposal	Negotiations ongoing
Likely redevelopment for residential use. Capital receipts may be disappointing but other disposal models could create other benefits.		

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Photographs of progress – to be presented at the meeting.