

12th March 2018

Policy, Projects and Resources Committee

Town Hall Update and Automated Suppression System

Report of: *Greg Campbell – Policy and Programme Manager*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

The Town Hall project is progressing in line with identified timescales.

This report provides a general update, progress on the Hub Groups and back office regarding the remodelled Town Hall.

The report provides information on the fire safety compliance of the scheme and the provision of an automated suppression system for members to consider following a motion at Ordinary Council (18.10.2017).

An automated suppression system is a general term given to systems which are activated automatically when a certain temperature is reached which in turn releases a liquid, substance or gas that reduces the impact or spread of a fire and/or smoke.

The report by Lawrence Webster Forrest (Fire Safety Compliance experts-see Appendix A attached) confirms that the current scheme (without any automated suppression system) meets the current standard. However, discussion with experts (including the Fire Brigade) state that risk is further mitigated if an Automated Suppression System is installed on the top two floors of the Town Hall.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Note the Town Hall update within this paper.

2.2 To agree that the PPR Committee receives a further update report on progress of the Town Hall at the next PP & R Committee.

2.3 Progress the detailed work necessary to install a water misting system via an Automated Suppression System on the top two floors of the Town Hall.

2.4 That an increased capital budget of £200,000 with an ongoing revenue cost for maintenance of £5,000 per annum be identified for the provision of an automated suppression system. That should the overall projected costs look to be exceeding this amount the decision be referred back to Policy, Projects and Resources Committee.

3. Introduction and Background

This report updates Members on the progress of the Town Hall Remodelling project, including information received following the request for a review of the fire safety compliance of the proposal, which includes consideration of an automated suppression system.

Overall Progress Update

The Town Hall Remodelling project is on schedule and continues to work towards a deadline of residential properties being habitable from the 1st April 2019. The completion of the remainder of the project is set for June 2019 when it is also envisaged that the Community Hub will be open for business. The Council's back office services will begin to relocate back to the Town Hall during July 2019. A schedule of homecoming will be developed in early 2019 as the project develops.

The enablement work will be finished by the 5th March 2018, which will see the complete 'strip out' of the entire building leaving a shell in which the remodelling can begin. Contractors are presently being appointed following a procurement exercise that began back in June 2017. The remodelling work will begin during March 2018 at the conclusion of some valued engineering and signing of appropriate contracts. All appropriate due diligence has been undertaken, including financial and a site visit, satisfying us of the ability,

approach and finished work of the company likely to undertake the remodelling.

The Hub

The Hub is the focal point of all services being delivered for the community and will include Mind, Council for Voluntary Services, Citizens Advice, the Council and Job Centre Plus who are all committed to the hub. Heads of Terms have all been agreed with these groups and 'Agreements to Lease' are now in the process of being signed. The design is now in its final draft and work will continue with these groups throughout the life cycle of the project to not only ensure their space is ready but to also discuss how the groups will work together once in the hub.

Back Office Space

Since the relocation of the back office to other buildings within the Borough, the Council has realised significant cultural changes to the way it works. This has seen a significant increase in working differently including remote working.

Therefore, a review of present space occupied by Brentwood Borough Council at Regus and the other sites like the Depot and Merrymeade has led to a conclusion that the space the Council required for a functioning back office when it returns to the Town Hall is far less than previously required. This will be recognised in revised plans to the first floor. The revised space will be utilised far more effectively making the most of the space, modern furniture, information, technology and equipment enabling a better office experience. There will be no impact on services nor the Council Chamber, committee room, meetings or other functions held at the Town Hall.

By reducing the space occupied by Council back office services it will free up space allowing for a greater proportion of commercial space to be let. The drawings and the effect on the financial model are presently being confirmed.

General Financial Update

The estimated final outturn of the project budget continues to be monitored. Following the completion of the valued engineering work with the company undertaking the final phase of the remodelling work, a review of the space allocation and the impact this will have on the expenditure and likely revenue, the Council will be in a position to report on the likely estimated expenditure of the project as a whole and the likely expected revenue as a whole.

Obviously additional inclusions to the scheme like the potential inclusion of an automated suppression system, which is being considered later in this report, will impact upon the final budgetary outturn.

Therefore, a further progress report including an estimated final outturn and revenue figure is recommended to be brought before the next PP & R Committee in 2018.

Committee request for Fire Safety review

A motion at the 18th October Ordinary Council meeting which was amended and carried as follows:

'This Council resolves to investigate as part of an overall review of safety measures the installation of a sprinkler system to be installed in the Town Hall building during alterations to the offices and during the conversion of the upper floors to 19 apartments.'

The commissioned report has now been received and reviewed by Building Surveying Services, ourselves and Millbridge our project management advisors for this project. Further advice, information and discussions have taken place with Essex County Fire and Rescue Services. The findings are set out in the sections below

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

The remodelled Town Hall in its present design meets the appropriate fire regulations that it must adhere to. Any recommendations within the report received from the specialist advisors Lawrence Webster Forrest – Fire Engineering & Fire Risk Management Consultants contained at Appendix One have already been incorporated into the design. The report confirms:

- All residential dwellings meet the requirements set out in 'Approved Document B' which sets out the means of warning and escape
- Each flat is provided with 30 minutes of protected stairway
- Travel distances within the office areas are acceptable
- The current proposals show that the number of exits per storey and room(s) are acceptable
- All floors provide a minimum of 60 minutes fire resisting compartmentalisation and each residential unit will form its own 60-minute fire resistant compartment

The report by Lawrence Webster Forrest confirms that the current scheme (without any automated suppression system) meets the current standards (subject to the items outlined in the report), which have now been

incorporated within the scheme. That said the report also supports the installation of an automatic suppression system for the following reasons:

- Increases the life safety within the building
- Increases property protection
- Will limit the extent of damage that fire could cause
- Likely to reduce the number of fire related injuries
- A suppression system will keep the fire to a much smaller size for a period which also reduces Co2 emissions
- Less water overall is required to fight a fire
- Reduces the risk to fire fighters

The installation of an automated suppression system was also endorsed by Essex Fire and Rescue.

However, the report also identifies the difficulty of installation of some systems because of the need for space for water tanks and pumps and the cost of ongoing maintenance associated to such systems.

Following the report, options available to the Council to provide an automatic suppression system were considered by Millbridge. Their report is attached at Appendix Two which provides the following background information.

The Millbridge report considered two options;

- i. A full sprinkler system for the whole building
- ii. A sprinkler system to the residential accommodation only which could be delivered through the following options:
 - a) Pump and tank system
 - b) Water misting system

5. Option 1, Whole Building - Full Tank Sprinkler System:

Whilst the installation of a full sprinkler system has its advantages it has some disadvantages including:

- Increased damage if activated (although isolated to the areas the sprinklers are activated)
- Installation and design costs
- Location issues
- Extension of the project timeline

Notwithstanding this, a full tank system which could cover the whole building, is likely to cost in excess of £400,000 with further knock on effects from the location and impact of the tank and pumps which have so far not been identified.

Any pump and tank system is also likely to delay the delivery timeframe of the Town Hall remodelling project, which in real terms would cost the Council in excess of £300,000 due to in increased tax

6. Option 2a Residential Only – Pump and Tank System

Again, this system has its advantages but also like the full building pump and tank system it has its disadvantages which have been identified in the previous chapters of this report.

Likely cost of is in excess of £146,000

7. Option 2c i, Residential Only - Water misting system (independent)

Misting systems when activated release a very fine water vapour to the area within the vicinity of the activation, reducing smoke and fire giving the occupant an extra 30 minutes to evacuate the building. This would be an independent system to each residential unit. This would require space for each tank within each residential unit and far less redesign work. It is therefore less likely to affect timelines.

Likely cost in excess of £110,000.

8. Option 2cii, Residential Only - Water misting system (central plant)

This would be an independent system fed by two tanks on the residential floors which would then supply a misting system to each flat and / or potentially common walkway areas, again providing a further 30 safe minutes to evacuate or be led to safety.

Likely cost in excess of £50,000.

9. Whole Building or Residential

As stated the building will meet the requirements for fire safety as set out by regulations. However, the installation of any automated suppression system would provide overall benefits.

It can also be argued that it is the residential area that is of most concern as its occupants are less predictable than commercial space which by the nature of its occupation is generally controlled to some degree by its use.

This argument can be supported as commercial occupants will have scheduled fire evacuations/procedures with manuals and training for staff which are controlled through standard practices. It is far more difficult when considering the residential areas where public live and sleep and not always necessarily when you expect them to carry out these activities. They are in a less controlled environment and therefore require more time and resources to maintain and keep safe. We must also bear in mind that office areas are less likely to be occupied 24x7 unlike residential areas.

It must also be noted that any system does and will not include the Police demise as they are already in situ and the risk of fire in this area is far less as it is in 24-hour occupation

10. Summary

The automated suppression systems identified within this report all provide opportunities to reduce overall fire damage and safe time to evacuate the building. The risk too tenants and visitors is considered far greater to those in the residential areas than the commercial areas and the mist system to these areas is the most economical

11. Recommendation

It is therefore recommended to:

- Note the Town Hall update within this paper.
- To agree that the PPR Committee receives a further update report on progress of the Town Hall at the next PP & R Committee.
- Progress the detailed work necessary to install a water misting system via an Automated Suppression System on the top two floors of the Town Hall.
- That an increased capital budget of £200,000 with an ongoing revenue cost for maintenance of £5,000 per annum be identified for the provision of an automated suppression system. That should the overall projected costs look to be exceeding this amount the decision be referred back to Policy, Performance and Finance Committee.

12. Reasons for Recommendation

It is recommended to report back to Members at the next PP & R Committee so they are aware of progress generally and the latest financial position in terms of any changes relating to both expenditure and revenue.

13. Consultation

Consultation was undertaken with professional fire engineering & fire risk management consultants as well as building surveying services, Essex Fire and Rescue Service and Millbridge our building project managers and quantity surveyors,

14. References to Corporate Plan

The Town Hall remodelling project fits with a number of corporate objectives set out in Vision for Brentwood 2016–19:

- Review the Town Hall project to deliver a community hub, shared by others
- Consider how Council assets can be utilised to promote sustainable development in the Borough
- Maximise Council assets to deliver corporate objectives and ensure community benefit
- Review our asset management governance strategy
- Develop new ways of working for the Council, improving service delivery and reducing costs and unnecessary bureaucracy
- Explore alternative methods of service delivery, including shared services and outsourcing

15. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Vanmellaerts, Financial Services Manager (Deputy Section 151)

Tel & Email: 01277 312829 jacqueline.vanmellaerts@brentwood.gov.uk

The costs of the individual systems have been identified in the report for members to decide the appropriate option for an automated suppression system. The specific Recommendation to include a £200k Capital budget provision will have to be funded from the Council's Capital Receipts, along with the existing monitoring of the Town Hall Project Costs. The Council's Capital Receipts at the moment are sustainable to fund this provision, but they are being reviewed as part of a wider concept through the Asset Development Program. The £5k p.a ongoing maintenance will be an

additional pressure within the current Town Hall Revenue model, however this is regularly under review and not yet finalised as the Council continues through the process.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Monitoring Officer

Tel & Email: 01277 312500 daniel.toohey@brentwood.gov.uk

The report attaches a review with recommendations from fire safety experts having regard to compliance with fire safety building regulations and relevant British and European standards where appropriate.

In selecting a contractor to install and maintain the chosen solution, the Council must comply with procurement regulations including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and its Contract Standing Orders as set out in the constitution. Legal Services are available to provide advice and assistance going forward.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

There appears to be no other implications at this point

16. Background Papers

None

17. Appendices to this report

Appendix A - Lawrence Webster Forrest Fire Safety Compliance Review
Appendix B – Millbridge Supporting Document

Report Author Contact Details:

Name: Greg Campbell

Telephone: 01277 312738

E-mail: greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk