

REPORT TO	ON
CABINET	Wednesday, 18 March 2020



TITLE	PORTFOLIO	REPORT OF
Works to Civic Conference and Business centre - Phase 2	Cabinet Member (Finance, Property and Assets)	Assistant Director of Projects and Development

Is this report a <b>KEY DECISION</b> (i.e. more than £100,000 or impacting on more than 2 Borough wards?)	Yes
Is this report on the <b>Statutory Cabinet Forward Plan</b> ?	Yes
Is the request outside the policy and budgetary framework and therefore subject to confirmation at full Council? .	No
Is this report confidential?	No

## PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This report sets out a proposed set of works to the Conference and Business area of the Civic Centre now branded as 'The Civic' including the creation of a second entrance directly into 'The Civic'.

## PORTFOLIO RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That Cabinet authorises the Director of Neighbourhoods and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Property and Asset to spend up to £150,000 as set out in the Capital programme for 2020/2021 on works to the Civic Centre with reference to the Conference and Business area.

## REASONS FOR THE DECISION

3. There is now a sum of £150,000 for works to the Civic Centre in the new Capital programme for 2020/2021 approved by full Council in February of this year. This Cabinet report is required to approve the actual spending of the £150,000 budget against a scheme within 'The Civic (Business and Conference) part of the Civic Centre.

## CORPORATE OUTCOMES

4. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	x
Health, Wellbeing and Safety	
Place, Homes and Environment	x

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

Our People and Communities	x
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## BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

5. The Civic Centre is an excellent asset for both the Council and the residents of South Ribble. In line with a Cabinet decision of 11<sup>th</sup> April 2018 a budget was approved of £130,000 to bring the process of updating the Civic centre and the facilities within it. The initial work seen as Phase 1 A included:

- Refurbishment of Gateway Reception and the introduction of new customer screens and information panels
- The modernisation of the Shield, Wheel and Cross rooms and the creation of the new Ribble room with new furniture
- The refurbishment of the Toilets in the Business and Conference area
- Introduction of upgraded Audio/Visual equipment including new screens, cameras, tables with embedded USB charging points and microphones in the Civic areas for civic (e.g. Cabinet, Council and Planning Committee) and commercial purposes.
- Refurbishing of the Lostock room

6. A further sum of £200,000 was added into the Capital programme for the financial year 2019/2020. This sum of alongside a historically underspent repair and maintenance budget has allowed the following work to be completed or planned at the Civic centre as phase 1B. This work will be completed by the end of May 2020:

- The refurbishment of all the toilets and the introduction of new Shower facilities into Civic Centre (completed)
- Introduction for new DWP staff entrance by the Lostock room (completed)
- Introduction of new electric car charging points including one for the new Mayoral car (completed)

- Building of a new office for use by CAB to complement other users of the building notably DWP and INSPIRE (drugs and alcohol support)
  - Refurbishment of the north wing of the staff offices in terms of decoration and new carpets (on-going will finish end of March 2020)
  - Introduction of Solar panels to the Civic centre (work underway)
  - Replacement of all lighting in the Civic centre with LED lighting (April 2020)
  - Introduction of new training and meeting rooms onto the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor (May 2020 after the police commissioner elections)
7. In addition to the above Capital work and in line with the aspirations of the original Cabinet report of 2018, work is also taking place on rebranding the old Banqueting suite as the Business and Conference centre now termed 'The Civic'. This will be linked to a new marketing programme, introducing a new booking system led by our new Conference and Bookings Officer.

#### **PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)**

8. In line with the aspirations of the original April 2018 Cabinet report and working with the new administration we are now able to bring forward proposals around phase 2 of improvements to the Conference and Business centre.
9. With the development of the Business and Conference centre there has been an ambition to create a second entrance directly from the Conference and Business centre onto the Car park so delegates attending events do not have to go through the main Council entrance. The proposed works comprises of a reduction of the kitchen facilities to a more basic servery setup. This will allow the creation of a new link corridor from the canteen area into the Civic suite through to the Conference and Business area.
10. The project will also include the renovation of the canteen into a coffee shop style break out space and a new self-service reception point for the conference and business centre. The reconfigured café style area will still be able to support the serving and seating of 55 people for hot meals when council meetings are held. and provide excellent break out facilities for staff. A dedicated new entrance will be created for the Conference and Business centre into the reconfigured cafe area from the rear car park. There will also be additional works to the external façade of the new entrance including new pedestrian routes to the main car park which will improve visibility and guide visitors to the Conference and Business centre. As part of the work consideration will also be given to how deliveries are made, and waste is dealt with at the Civic centre with the new entrance. A concept drawing of the new Entrance is attached to this report as appendix A
11. Linked to the proposed phase 2 project and expenditure on 'The Civic' (Business and Conference centre) we have developed a business plan which is about bringing in more external income to the Civic Centre.

Since the opening of the Civic centre, the venue has been used extensively by thousands of guests attending events. Presently, all visitors of 'The Civic'

(Business and Conference area) are required to enter through the main council entrance. The Phase 2 project would allow for 'The Civic' to operate as a separate entity with its own dedicated entrance and create a bespoke area for local businesses to use for informal small meetings and get together. This will increase visitor numbers but also act as a marketing tool enticing businesses to book bigger meetings and events at 'The Civic'.

To ensure it remains contemporary and competitive, a comprehensive review of how our space compares in the marketplace is being undertaken. This analysis includes understanding changing demands of the average business user and the facilities important to them, placing emphasis on client expectations and requirements, and their perception of our competitiveness.

In the local area there is only one setting which currently caters to the small business meeting demands; businesses wishing to enjoy a drink in a welcoming and professional environment where they can take small meetings away from their main hub of operations. For events such as this, organisations are limited to supermarket café's, small high street coffee shops, out of town venue's or the one setting previously mentioned. None of these options are ideal for various reasons and it is planned that 'The Civic' can help fill this gap in the market and bring increased numbers into the venue, some of whom may look to hire the meeting rooms or spaces. Key to this will be the provision of high-quality free Wi-fi for people using the new facility.

It will be vital for the continuing financial viability of 'The Civic' that it is well used for most of the time it is open. This will not necessarily happen automatically, and it will be essential to have in place, an effective marketing strategy. This will need to address the following principles:

- Maximising benefits created by the location, appearance and range of facilities;
- Creating a professional/corporate image;
- Creating an atmosphere in 'The Civic' that is fully inclusive and attractive to people of all ages, backgrounds and interests.

To appeal to the business users in the local community, the following strategies are proposed to maximise usage:

- Holding introductory/open days and other events to generate interest.
- Promoting an active relationship with local press and media and advertise the activities & events in local business directories.
- Carrying out surveys at regular intervals in order to judge changing needs.
- Creating and maintaining an effective presence on the Council's website and links to other professional sites.
- Ensuring that hire charges and facilities remain competitive in comparison with other venues in Lancashire

**12.** The marketing highlighted above is underway and will continue whilst the physical alterations to the Civic Centre happen so we can hit the ground running when the new entrance is opened.

13. As highlighted in the Business plan attached to this report as appendix B the project is linked to bringing in new income to the Civic centre. Currently the income target for the Civic Centre is £36,000, which is double the target of £18,000 in previous years. This will be reviewed on a yearly basis to look at increasing that income target so that it begins to pay back the capital investment

## **CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION**

14. Whilst there has been no direct public consultation concerning the proposed work, there has been on-going communication with potential users of the Conference and Business centre once a second entrance has been put in. This has taken place in the form of one to one meetings and responses received linked to new marketing information that has been circulated

## **ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

15. Cabinet could choose not to take forward this project. This would mean that the aspirations as originally set out in the April 2018 Cabinet meeting are not realised along with the ambitions of the new Administration's wish to develop a high-quality Business and Conference area for South Ribble whilst also enhancing facilities for both the democratic functions of the Civic centre and for staff.

## **AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

16. There are no Air Quality implications with this report.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

17. As part of the scheme a full Risk Register will be developed and updated as the project is delivered.

## **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPACT**

18. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) will be carried out as part of the proposed scheme

## **COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER**

19. The approved capital programme for 2020-21 to 2023-24 includes a budget of £150,000 for this scheme.

## **COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER**

20. Clearly procurement rules must be complied with in this regard. If it is proposed to award any single contract worth over £100,000 then a report will need to come back to Cabinet prior to reward. The procurement team need to be liaised with throughout. It is expected that appropriate tendering exercises will be carried out.

21. Subsequently formal contracts will need to be entered into to protect the council's interests.
22. The final proposals will need to be checked with the planning team to check whether there are any planning requirements.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

There are no background papers to this report

## **APPENDICES**

- Appendix A: Proposed Concept Plan of the remodelled Business and Conference centre
- Appendix B: Business Plan

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