

Cherwell District Council

Executive

6 November 2023

Relocation of CDC administrative headquarters from Bodicote House to Castle Quay

Report of Corporate Director of Resources

This report is public

An exempt version of this report and the exempt appendix, restricted by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of Local Government Act are included as a separate agenda item

Purpose of report

This report seeks approval of the Business Case to commence work on the project of relocating the Council's administrative headquarters from Bodicote House to Castle Quay

1.0 Recommendations

The meeting is recommended:

- 1.1 To approve the Business Case for the relocation of the Council Offices from Bodicote House to Castle Quay.
- 1.2 To delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Resources, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Property, to initiate a project to relocate the administrative offices of the Council to Castle Quay
- 1.3 To recommend to the Council to approve an increase in the Capital Programme of £4.5m towards the delivery of this project in order to authorise expenditure for the project

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has reviewed its existing office accommodation and has identified that it is no longer fit for purpose and to relocate to Castle Quay whilst creating high quality administrative facilities (including public meeting facilities) would provide the following:
 - High quality administrative facilities, with greater accessibility for the public and partners with excellent public transport links
 - Environmental benefits – better, more efficient facilities with improved transport links move us towards our net-zero ambitions

- Significant ongoing reductions relating to running costs and a further revenue savings from the additional cash available from the net capital receipt. (See part 2 report)
- The ability to release the Bodicote House site for redevelopment, releasing a brownfield site for much needed housing whilst generating significant capital receipts.

3.0 The Business Case

- 3.1 Cherwell District Council's main administrative office accommodation is located at Bodicote House. It has become apparent that due to the adoption of more agile working practices as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the current accommodation is both too large and is not fit for purpose to meet with the Council's needs for the future delivery of its services.
- 3.2 Banbury town centre has, along with the rest of the country, suffered a realignment of its retail offer due to online shopping. As a result, a significant amount of space has become available within Castle Quay. Consideration has therefore been given to relocating the Council's administrative headquarters into some of the vacant space as part of a wider regeneration project.
- 3.3 This Business Case has been developed along with the report recommending the sale of the Bodicote House site as monies from the sale will be required to fund the works to create the proposed new facilities at Castle Quay

Background Information

- 3.4 Bodicote House is currently in need of essential maintenance and refurbishment works, some of which has been deferred since discussions commenced around the future of the site several years ago. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, agile working has been more widely adopted, not only by CDC but a number of similar organisations and there is subsequently a better understanding of how this creates an improved work / life balance for many people.
- 3.5 Due to the changes in how people now work, as an organisation we require less space than we currently have. Bodicote House is therefore too large for what we require both now and, in the future, is in need of significant expenditure not just to maintain but to improve the facilities and currently affords office accommodation of an inferior quality to many of our contemporaries.
- 3.6 Should it be decided not to relocate and to retain Bodicote House, the works required include (but is not limited to) the following:
- Replacement Mechanical & Electrical systems
 - Replacement Heating
 - Replacement of windows
 - Boundary repairs
 - Statutory Improvements
 - Internal redecoration

- 3.7 It should be noted that these are predominantly remedial works rather than refurbishment of the office space and would be carried out whilst we are in occupation within the building, resulting in an element of disruption

Financial Appraisal (of recommended option)

- 3.8 For further information see exempt report.

4.0 Conclusions and Reasons for Recommendation

The Council has reviewed the existing office provision over a number of years, cumulating with this final review. It has been ascertained that the most economically advantageous provision of office accommodation would be to relocate to the Castle Quay Shopping Centre. Whilst this is financially the most appropriate provision of accommodation, it also aligns to the aspirations of creating a multi-use hub at Castle Quay, acting as a catalyst for the regeneration of Banbury Town Centre. The option also has the potential to redevelop the current Bodicote House site (see separate cover) and works towards the Council's environmental aspirations in enabling a more efficient office environment with greater public transport connectivity to the site

5.0 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

A number of alternative options were considered and deemed to be less favourable than the recommendation herein, particularly from a financial perspective; these options and reasons for rejection are detailed at length in the accompanying Business Case, Appendix 1 (Exempt).

6.0 Implications

Financial and Resource Implications

- 6.1 See Exempt report

Comments checked by:

Michael Furness, Assistant Director Finance (S151 Officer), 01295 221845,
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Legal Implications

- 6.6 See Exempt report

Comments checked by:

Shiraz Sheikh, Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director – Law and Governance
Shiraz.sheikh@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Risk Implications

- 6.9 The Risk Implications are detailed within the Business Case in exempt appendix 1. It is noted that the project, through following the PRINCE 2 methodology, will have its own individual risk register and this will be reviewed by the Transformation Board.

Comments checked by :

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader
01295 221556, Celia.prado-teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Equalities and Inclusion Implications

- 6.10 There are no direct equalities and inclusion implications as a consequence of this report.

Comments checked by :

Celia Prado-Teeling, Performance and Insight Team Leader
01295 221556, Celia.prado-teeling@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

Sustainability Implications

- 6.11 This report has positive implications for CDC in that, as a primary objective, it is looking to provide a more energy efficient workplace for the Council, aligned to better public transport links.

Comments checked by :

Ed Potter, Assistant Director Environmental Services
01295 221574, Ed.potter@cherwell-dc.gov.uk

7.0 Decision Information

Key Decision

Financial Threshold Met: Yes

Community Impact Threshold Met: Yes

Wards Affected

Adderbury, Bloxham and Bodicote
Banbury Cross and Neithrop

Links to Corporate Plan and Policy Framework

To provide offices that meet the needs of all staff both now and for the future in a sustainable and efficient way, taking into account hybrid working.

Lead Councillor

Cllr Eddie Reeves, Portfolio Holder for Property

Document Information

Appendix number and title

- Appendix 1, Business Case EXEMPT

Background papers

None

Report Author and contact details

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