

SUBJECT: Abergavenny Hub, project update

MEETING: Bryn y Cwm Area Committee

DATE: 16th May 2018

DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED: All

1. PURPOSE:

To provide Bryn y Cwm Area Committee with an update of progress on the proposed Abergavenny Hub

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.1 To note the report.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 A tender exercise was undertaken last July via Sell to Wales to appoint a design team to undertake the detailed designs and costings for the proposed hub within Abergavenny Town Hall. GWP Architecture Ltd were subsequently appointed to lead and they have assembled a team of experts including Quantity Surveyors, mechanical and electrical engineers and acoustic specialists.
- 3.2 They commenced work in September last year and since that time have been testing the initial design concepts in consultation with CADW and the Councils Heritage Officer to produce the final designs and associated costs.
- 3.3 Following these discussions amendments have had to be made to the original designs to accommodate heritage concerns. These largely relate to the proposed mezzanine, its design and how the space is created at first floor level. In particular instead of the whole removal of the existing walls facing the market hall, these will now remain insitu, but punctured so that the space is still fully accessible.
- 3.4 Accessibility to the building as a whole remains a key outcome and this will be met through the provision of a new lift situated at the front of the building, which will open on all floors including the theatre. The installation of the lift and the creation of the mezzanine require listed building consent and to facilitate this an application was submitted in March, reference DM/2018/00466.
- 3.5 Another requirement of the brief was to review the existing utilities infrastructure to provide a more future proofed solution that maximised flexibility whilst minimising energy costs. The mechanical and electrical engineers have been working on this

element and have identified solutions that will be accommodated as part of the hub project.

- 3.6 Stakeholder consultation has been undertaken on the proposed designs and on the whole this was positive. There are however some proposed changes from the Town Council and a separate meeting is being arranged to clarify these.
- 3.7 The Design team are now working on the proposals for the proposed phasing of the works and the cost envelope. In the event that we are successful in obtaining listed building consent and resolving stakeholder queries such that the scheme remains viable a report will be submitted to County Council seeking approval to proceed with the project.
- 3.8 At this stage we are not in a position to confirm the length of the works and the impact on services, we are however working with the design team to try and find solutions that will enable the building to remain open during the works, albeit that they may need to be re-located as the phases progress. This will become determined in the next few months as the designs and phasing are crystallised.

4 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

| Option | Benefits | Risks | Comments |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Do nothing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The council will not incur a circa £2,000,000 capital cost to provide the hub within the Town Hall The service will remain as existing, i.e. separate service provisions which some users may prefer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abergavenny will be the only town not to have a hub and will fall behind in terms of service provision Will make it difficult to integrate partner services. The library will continue to operate within a building that is not fit for purpose. | In the event that we are not able to resolve stakeholder space requirements or obtain listed buildings consent, this may be the only viable option. |
| Provide a hub within the town hall. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A purpose built space designed to meet the needs of the service within the confines of a grade II listed building. Maximises the use of the Town Hall, consolidating services and its strategic position within the Town Increases footfall to the building potentially improving the trading position for market traders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-purpose building so stakeholders aspirations may make the project unviable Unable to obtain listed building consent Cost of the scheme are too high given the complexity of the building Difficult to undertake the works whilst maintaining service | Preferred solution and the one that is the subject of this report. There are still risks associated with its delivery and these will need to be resolved prior to any implementation |

| Option | Benefits | Risks | Comments |
|--|--|--|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a new lift improving accessibility for all building users Improves energy infrastructure Provides an opportunity for partners to deliver services from the building, improving the offer for users. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provision for existing users Space being provided is not sufficient to make it viable to undertake the scheme | |
| Identify an alternative accommodation solution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A back up in the event that the Town Hall scheme proves unviable | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has already incurred costs in excess of £100,000 to develop the Town Hall scheme following stakeholder consultation of the initial designs and Member consent in September 2016. This would be abortive if the scheme does not proceed and it is unlikely that additional revenue could be allocated given the on-going austerity measures and associated cuts to Council funding. An alternative building was considered prior to the Town Hall being identified as the preferred location. Should an alternative location be preferred this is likely to incur acquisition costs (capital and or revenue) which may increase the scheme costs. | Given that this has already been explored and discounted this is not recommended. |

5. REASONS:

5.1 The current library provision within Abergavenny is outdated and the space standard is below our other hub provisions:

| | Catchment (2011 census figures) | Floor space m ² | Floor space ft ² |
|---------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Abergavenny Library | 15,200 | 222 | 2,340 |
| Abergavenny OSS | | 147 | 1,582 |
| Caldicot Hub | 19,000 | 426 | 4,585 |

| | | | |
|--------------|--------|-----|-------|
| Chepstow Hub | 12,350 | 466 | 5,016 |
| Monmouth Hub | 10,100 | 302 | 3,251 |
| Usk Hub | 2,800 | 238 | 2,562 |

5.2 The proposed project will improve the space allocation and provide storage within the basement. The actual space allocation will be determined when discussions with the Town Council and their requirements have been concluded.

5.3 The first floor proposal is to provide a flexible multi-purpose space which can be utilised by other building users outside of the hub operating hours, as well as a community room.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 The capital costs of the scheme are to be finalised, but a funding envelope of circa £2,000,000 was identified in the previous Council report. There is no Council approval in place to drawdown this funding and this will be subject to a further report to Full Council in the event that we are able to determine that the proposal will result in service improvement, has all the statutory consents and is within the indicated funding envelope.

7. WELLBEING OF FUTURE GENERATIONS IMPLICATIONS (INCORPORATING EQUALITIES, SUSTAINABILITY, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

The proposal will result in improved accessibility and secure the long term use and viability of this asset. It therefore has a positive impact and is aligned with the well-being of future generation's legislation. The proposal does not have any safeguarding or corporate parenting implications.

9. CONSULTEES:

Estates Manager
Head of Policy and Governance

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Report to County Council 22.09.2016

11. AUTHOR:

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