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| Report to: | EXECUTIVE CABINET |
| Date: | 27 March 2024 |
| Executive Member: | Councillor Jack Naylor, Inclusive Growth, Business & Employment |
| Reporting Officer: | Julian Jackson, Director of Place Ben Middleton, Assistant Director Strategic Property Nicola Elsworth, Assistant Director Investment, Development and Housing |
| Subject: | ASHTON TOWN HALL UPDATE |
| Report Summary: | The report provides an update that the next stage of physical works at Ashton Town Hall will comprise repair of the front elevation parapet and building façade. Approval is sought to enter into contract for the delivery of this work utilising external grant funding from the Levelling Up Fund. |
| Recommendations: | That Executive Cabinet be recommended to agree: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) That the total maximum budget for Ashton Town Hall is set at £3,400,000, including £597,090 of additional contingency for any un-costed works, financed from the Levelling Up Fund. (ii) That the Council enter into the standard Design & Build contract with the inspiredspaces Tameside Limited (LEP) for the works to Ashton Town Hall to a value of £2,802,910 including the LEP fee, subject to a satisfactory independent Value for Money Assessment and that the Council enter into a Deed of Appointment with the LEP for the appointment of an Independent Certifier for the scheme to protect both parties positions and ensure full compliance with the contract. |
| Corporate Plan: | Key aims of the Corporate Plan are to provide opportunities for people to fulfil their potential through work, skills and enterprise and to ensure modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations. The proposed works to Ashton Town Hall will deliver against these aims. |
| Policy Implications: | The proposed works to Ashton Town Hall will support delivery of the Borough's Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021, and the Tameside Climate Change & Environment Strategy. |
| Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer) | The report provides an update on next stage of physical works at Ashton Town Hall. The related works will be financed via the £19.9m Levelling Up Capital grant that was awarded to the Council on 27 October 2021. Of this funding £3.400m has been earmarked specifically to support the first stage in the restoration of Ashton Town Hall. A revised cost plan for the parapet works at Ashton Town Hall has been identified at a total cost of £2.803m which will allow delivery of the works within the £3.400m of external grant funding that is available via the Levelling Up Fund. The Levelling Up grant |

allocation must be expended by 31 March 2025 in accordance with the grant conditions.

Further updates to the restoration programme will be presented in subsequent reports together with the related financial implications.

**Legal Implications:
(Authorised by the
Borough Solicitor)**

The report highlights the significant cost of bringing the Town Hall back into use. The present report seeks approval to proceed with largely external works to protect the structural integrity of the building. A number of those works are not yet costed as they will not be clear until enabling works are undertaken.

The Council must ensure that the works are closely monitored and that the contract is effectively managed including challenge (when necessary) to ensure that the works are carried out in time and to budget.

Risk Management:

Risks associated with the project are set out at Section 6.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Mike Reed, Head of Major Programmes.



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has identified Ashton Town Centre as one of its growth priorities, supporting delivery of the Tameside Inclusive Growth Strategy 2021-26 in making our town centres hubs for living, culture, employment and services supporting a sustainable retail sector. The town centre also forms part of the identified Eastern Growth Corridor taking in Ashton St Petersfield, Ashton Moss and Ashton Town Centre, which form part of the Ashton Mayoral Development Zone (AMDZ), to deliver high innovation growth.
- 1.2 The Grade II listed Ashton Town Hall was the traditional home of municipal life in Ashton since its opening in 1840 and extension in 1878. Its heritage, importance and significance lie in its classical façade framing the historic setting of the Market Square.
- 1.3 The long term viable future of Ashton Town Hall is an important component in the wider plans for Ashton Town Centre (including use of the £19.9m secured from the Levelling Up Fund) which recognise the important role of the Town Hall façade in framing the Market Square. Whilst the heritage importance of the building lies in its classical façade it is noted that there are significant challenges associated with securing a long term sustainable use for the building interior. The development of more detailed proposals for the Town Hall needs to take place in this context and be consistent with the Council's long term approach to the regeneration of Ashton Town Centre and the Council's wider Strategic Asset Management Plan.
- 1.4 The Town Hall was physically linked to the Tameside Administrative Centre (TAC) from 1980 until 2015 and played an important role in accommodating civic and other functions. The Town Hall was closed in May 2015 to facilitate its physical disconnection from TAC as part of the demolition and site clearance of TAC under the Vision Tameside programme and the development of Tameside One. The civic functions of the Town Hall, displaced by its closure, have since been successfully accommodated at Tameside One, since its phased opening from March 2019 and in other civic buildings around the borough.

2. PHASED RESTORATION APPROACH

- 2.1 In 2021, the Council submitted a bid to the Levelling Up Fund Round 1, and was awarded £19.9m for Ashton Town Centre on 27 October 2021. Of this funding £3.4m was specifically identified to support the first stage in the restoration of Ashton Town Hall.
- 2.2 The funding ask for the Town Hall within the Levelling Up Fund bid was based on the available high level cost plan in 2020 of £3.4m for the completion of repairs to strengthen the existing roof structure and delivery of an envelope restoration scheme. This cost plan noted that the full scope of works required and total cost could not be confirmed until the necessary intrusive survey work was completed and fully analysed.

PHASE 1 – ENVELOPE RESTORATION

- 2.3 Approval to establish an envelope restoration scheme, including roof strengthening, was granted by Executive Cabinet in December 2019. The repair and restoration of the Ashton Town Hall envelope, in advance of an internal refurbishment and remodelling, was identified as being necessary to:
 - Limit any further deterioration of the building.
 - Provide an improved external appearance of the Town Hall from Tameside One, Ashton Market Square and the wider public realm; noting the importance of the façade to Ashton Market Square.
 - Facilitate further consideration of the options for internal restoration of the Town Hall alongside completion of intrusive surveys.
 - Enable the Council to develop a more detailed plan and identify a long term sustainable use for the building

- Identify further external funding sources to enable the Council to bid for grants to support the future use of the building thereby easing the burden on the Council's capital programme.

2.4 In November 2021, Executive Cabinet gave approval to utilise £3.4m secured from the Levelling Up Fund for the Town Hall envelope restoration scheme.

2.5 The full scope of the envelope restoration works included:

- **Roof repairs including the removal and reinstatement of multiple Mechanical and Engineering penetrations.** The roof is in very poor condition. Water leaks are repaired when they become apparent but damage to ceilings and floor coverings has occurred. The roof has been compromised through multiple Mechanical and Engineering penetrations which have taken place over many years. The building requires a new mechanical and electrical system so the intention is to remove the existing installation and repair the roof where it has been compromised.
- **Repair and restoration of the rear elevations.** The Town Hall was closed in order to facilitate its physical disconnection from TAC as part of the demolition and site clearance of TAC. The disconnection resulted in significant damage and scarring to the Town Hall's rear elevations, including the need for stabilisation and remediation works. The rear elevations have multiple door and Mechanical and Engineering penetrations which require significant repair and restoration.
- **Repair to stone work and cleaning of the front elevations, including the parapet and Town Hall steps.** An inspection of the front elevation parapet has highlighted the need for repair and remediation of the stone work.
- **Soft strip of the remaining Mechanical and Engineering systems, including any remaining asbestos.** Many of the mechanical and electrical systems within the building are obsolete and/or compromised. The building will require a complete new system throughout. In order to remove all the envelope related penetrations it is proposed that a further Mechanical and Engineering strip-out of the internal spaces be undertaken, as part of the envelope scheme, along with any remaining asbestos in readiness for the internal refurbishment.
- **Reinstate temporary internal heating, power and ventilation to maintain the internal fabric of the building.** The repair and restoration of the building envelope will go a long way in preserving and preventing the further deterioration of the internal fabric of the building. However, the internal spaces will benefit significantly from the reintroduction of basic heating, ventilation and lighting in advance of any future redevelopment. This will also facilitate a safe and accessible environment.
- **Create DDA compliant access to and within the building.** Improved access is required both in to and throughout the building to ensure DDA compliance.

PHASE 2 – INTERNAL RESTORATION

2.6 The existing Town Hall building is arranged over three floors and sits within a site area of c1,450 sq m. Due to a change in levels across the site, the ground floor is at street level at the rear of the Town Hall and at a lower, sub-street level at the front of the building.

2.7 The internal restoration of Ashton Town Hall, which would be necessary to enable the building to be capable of occupation, would be a significant refurbishment estimated to require an additional budget in excess of £15m at present day prices to complete in full.

2.8 It is noted that due to the significant cost implications and access issues associated with bringing the Lower Ground Floor and the Second Floor back into full use it is likely that both of these areas would need to be mothballed under any internal restoration scheme.

3. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 3.1 The intrusive survey work completed to date has identified that scheme cost are now considerably in excess of the original £3.4m estimates. The cost of the repair of the whole roof, high level stone parapet and façade works for the whole building is now estimated to be circa £8m.
- 3.2 There are a number of reasons as to why the costs have increased so considerably from the previous high level cost plans. These include the extremely high levels of construction cost inflation between 2020 and 2023, further deterioration in the overall condition of the building, the requirement for full scaffold tenting and sheeting to the whole building for both the works to be carried out and allow for the building to dry out, full replacement of structural roof timbers and the roof walkway system, additional stonework repairs and strengthening works, making good works internally and additional heritage rainwater goods.
- 3.3 In September 2023 Listed Building Consent was granted for re-roofing works, localised repairs to parapet stonework at roof eaves level and structural envelope repairs. The application sought consent for re-slatting works to roofs 1-8 including replacement breather membrane and timber roofing lathes; gutter repairs to all gutter and roof interfaces; access and maintenance walkways; localised chimney repairs and removal; structural stone work repairs and replacement where required; removal of legacy iron fixing; structural making safe / repair to legacy structural openings (typically to the northern elevations post demolition of the Tameside Administration Centre (TAC) building; and damp proof tanking remediation / making good to black areas of the existing external northern façade.
- 3.4 In the context of the significant increases in the cost plan for the envelope restoration works at the Town Hall and the potential consideration of alternative approaches to the building it is recommended that the roof replacement work (with the exception of any temporary measures to reduce water ingress) is paused at this stage with a focus on progressing works to repair the parapet and the facade restoration for the south and east elevations.
- 3.5 This approach will help to address immediate health and safety issues associated with the risk of falling masonry from the façade and parapet and maintain some momentum in respect of physical works utilising the secured Levelling Up Fund grant, which needs to be utilised by 31 March 2025, without the risk of costly works that are potentially abortive in the long term. This approach will provide the scope for a long term phased approach to the building that will enable the removal of some of the existing hoarding and fencing once the parapet and façade restoration is complete. There would then be a pause in works whilst further external grant funding (which is currently unidentified) is secured to deliver future phases.
- 3.6 The costs incurred to date in respect of the work undertaken at the Town Hall have been utilised to carry out emergency works and feasibility surveys that will still be required whatever approach the Council ultimately take in respect of the future of the building. These costs are incorporated into cost plan set out in Section 4 of this report.
- 3.7 The works to Ashton Town Hall will need to complete by December 2024 to enable the public realm works on Market Square, which will be running concurrently, to be completed by March 2025.

4. FINANCIAL SUMMARY & IMPACT ON THE APPROVED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

- 4.1 A revised cost plan for parapet works and façade restoration of the building has identified a total cost of £2,802,910 (including all additional fees). This will enable delivery of the works within the £3,400,000 of external grant funding currently available for the project via the Levelling Up Fund for utilisation by March 2025, whilst providing an additional contingency budget for un-costed exclusions for £597,090.

- 4.2 **Table 1** sets out a summary of the revised cost plan for the works to Ashton Town Hall. The final cost plan (at January 2024) provided by the LEP is attached at **Appendix 1**. The estimated additional design and build fees have been calculated in collaboration with the LEP.

Table 1

| | £ |
|--|------------------|
| Cost Plan (January'24) - Appendix 1 Refers | 2,386,730 |
| Estimated Additional Design and Build Fees | |
| - VFM | 3,000 |
| - Legal | 12,000 |
| - Independent Certifier | 20,000 |
| - Insurance | 90,000 |
| - LEP Fee | 47,734 |
| - Contingency | 243,446 |
| Sub Total | 2,802,910 |
| Additional Contingency for Un-costed Exclusions | 597,090 |
| Total Budget | 3,400,000 |

- 4.3 The cost plan provided by the LEP includes a number of un-costed exclusions. The exclusions are due to the fact that some elements of the scheme cannot be priced until the next phase of works have started on site. The standard Design and Build contract has no provision for provisional sums. Any costs which cannot be priced are included in the Council's project budget but not included in the contract sum until a firm price and scope is provided by the LEP and a variation to the contract agreed.
- 4.4 The additional contingency available via the Levelling Up Fund will mitigate against these un-costed exclusions. The monitoring of spend from the contingency will be via regular updates to SPCMP. Any unspent contingency from the Levelling Up Fund will be utilised for further public realm works to enable full drawdown of external grant funding available.
- 4.5 It is important to reiterate that the final cost plan from January 2024 remains subject to change and the total scheme costs cannot be fixed until a Design and Build Contract has been signed. The cost plan is currently undergoing an external Value for Money review. The approval of this report to progress the proposed works to Ashton Town Hall and will enable the Council to secure the final agreement with the LEP to enter into a Design and Build Contract.
- 4.6 In accordance with the provisions of the standard Design and Build contract, the Council and the LEP will jointly appoint an independent certifier to review the project as it progresses and certify any valuation claims.

5. PROGRAMME & NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Subject to approval, work to draft a Design & Build contract with the LEP will begin. The draft programme is set out in **Table 2**:

Table 2

| Action | Date/Timescale |
|---|----------------|
| Report to Executive Board/Executive Cabinet | March 2024 |
| Contract Agreed | April 2024 |
| Estimated start with site set up | May 2024 |
| Estimated completion date | December 2024 |
| Regular updates to SPCMP | Ongoing |

5.3 The high-level programme provided by the LEP is attached as **Appendix 2**

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The main project risks associated with delivery of the Civic Hall roof project have been identified in **Table 3**:

Table 3

| Risk Area | Detail | RAG Rating | Mitigation | RAG Rating |
|-------------------------|---|------------|---|------------|
| Financial | Insufficient budget to complete the scope of works required. | Red | Explore all value engineering opportunities and alternative approaches. | Yellow |
| Financial | Estimated scheme costs continue to increase as a result of delay/inflation. | Red | Utilise existing arrangements with the LEP to reduce timescales to enter into contract. | Yellow |
| Procurement | Lack of capacity in the construction sector to undertake the works. | Yellow | Utilise existing arrangements with the LEP to secure delivery partners. | Green |
| Procurement | Long lead in times for the procurement of specialist materials, such as stonework, cause delay in delivery. | Yellow | Identified requirements and place orders for materials early. | Green |
| Asset Management | Building condition continues to deteriorate as wider works are delayed | Red | Continue to actively monitor building condition and take appropriate temporary measures if necessary. | Yellow |
| Programme | Works to Ashton Town Hall will need to take place concurrently with public realm works on Market Square. | Red | Apply appropriate project management to ensure all elements are delivered within required timescales. | Yellow |
| Programme | Lack of resource capacity to undertake work in line with expectations. | Yellow | Apply adequate resource to the project to ensure programme adherence. | Green |

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 As set out at the front of the report.