

Report to:	EXECUTIVE CABINET
Date:	18 December 2019
Executive Member:	Executive Member (Finance & Economic Growth)
Reporting Officer:	Jayne Traverse, Director of Growth
Subject:	VISION TAMESIDE - PHASE 3 (ASHTON TOWN HALL)
Report Summary:	<p>Works to Ashton Town Hall form the next phase of the Vision Tameside flagship development. The condition of Ashton Town Hall continues to give cause for concern and if significant work is not undertaken to the “envelope” in the short term then this significant heritage asset may be put at risk, and the cost of work required to restore and redevelop the building is likely to increase significantly. In order to arrest any further deterioration of the building, which will inevitably occur whilst alternative development options are explored, it is proposed that governance be sought to undertake an “envelope” refurbishment/restoration scheme procured through the LEP, as the first stage of a two stage approach to the redevelopment of the building. In order to establish a high level cost and programme the LEP will require a budget of £0.050m. In advance of the proposed envelope scheme emergency repairs works are required to the building parapet and roof. The cost of the emergency repair is estimated to be £0.120m. In addition, a further £0.100m is requested as a contingent budget which will mitigate any further delays if the costs of the emergency repairs increase beyond the projected budget.</p>
Recommendations:	It is proposed that a further £0.270m be released from the remaining Ashton Town Hall earmarked budget of £9.990m as set out in this report.
Corporate Plan:	The proposed scheme supports the objectives of the Corporate Plan
Policy Implications:	In line with current policy.
Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer)	<p>In June 2017 a budget of £350k was approved for initial feasibility and scoping works for the redevelopment of Ashton Town Hall. A further earmarked sum of £10 million was included in the Capital Programme as part of the prioritisation of the programme which was approved by Executive Cabinet in March 2019.</p> <p>In July 2019, Executive Cabinet approved the release of £100k for further options appraisal work for the redevelopment of the Town Hall. This report is requesting further release of funds from the earmarked sum to undertake some emergency repair works and develop an envelope restoration scheme, pending full redevelopment of the building.</p>
Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor)	Members need to be satisfied that this remains a strategic priority and need to recognise that whilst £10million has been earmarked in the Capital Programme this is not the cost or budget for the project. Detailed work as identified in the report needs to be undertaken to scope out and price those works and this will then enable the budget to be established within which the project must

be delivered. The funding approval's sought are to keep building watertight and to enable the survey's to be undertaken to establish nature and extent of work required to restore. It is therefore important that the Council looks to establish where possible any grant funding and commercialisation options that would offset any capital and/or running costs. The Council's procurement governance arrangements provide for the LEP to project manage and procure any subcontractors for the work required. Whilst cabinet needs to approve any expenditure, the monitoring and oversight of the project lies with Strategic Planning and Capital Monitoring Panel. Any works to the building will need to comply with the Planning Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas Act 1990.

Risk Management:

Risks associated with the report are set out in section 5.

Background Information:

The background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting Nicola Turner



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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Vision Tameside is a flagship development for Tameside aiming to provide much needed economic growth and investment. Phase 2 of this pioneering project is now complete and comprises a new 7,000m² Advanced Skills Centre, a new Joint Public Service Centre for Tameside Council and its partners and retail space for Wilko's under the banner of Tameside One. The next phase of the development includes the completion of public realm works and the restoration and redevelopment of Ashton Town Hall. Proposals for the development of public realm will be the subject of further reports.
- 1.2 The Grade II listed Ashton Town Hall has been the traditional home of municipal life in Ashton since its opening in 1840 and has remained largely unchanged in layout since it was extended in 1878. As Tameside's premier civic building, its heritage importance and significance lies in its classical façade framing the Market Square and anchoring the historic setting at the very heart of the town.
- 1.3 The Town Hall was physically linked to the Tameside Administrative Centre (TAC) from 1980 until 2015 and played an important role accommodating civic and other functions. The Town Hall was closed in order to facilitate its physical disconnection from TAC as part of the administrative centres demolition and site clearance. The disconnection resulted in significant damage to the Town Hall's rear elevations resulting in the requirement for an extended closure to undertake significant stabilisation and remediation works funded in part from demolition insurance provision. The then civic functions of Ashton Town Hall, displaced by the closure have been successfully accommodated in civic buildings around the borough.
- 1.4 The delay to the redevelopment of the Town Hall was compounded by the collapse of Carillion and the subsequent delays and cost pressures on the approved Capital Programme associated with the completion of Tameside One.
- 1.5 A report to the Council's Executive Cabinet in June 2017 outlined the vision and benefits associated with the redevelopment of the Town Hall building and approval was given to the provision of a project development budget of £350,000. It was envisaged that the £350,000 capital budget allocation would be utilised to establish outline redevelopment proposals including sufficient feasibility information to allow for a more detailed and robust cost plan to inform further governance. In addition, internal and external stakeholder consultation was undertaken to establish how the heritage of the building is to be restored and / or maintained and how the building's internal remodelling could be optimised to support 21st century use, the needs of the community, the building's financial viability and the regeneration of Ashton Town Centre. Consultation with the following internal and external partners has supported the vision for the remodelling proposals - Historic England, HLF, MP's office and Council various services (Planning, Facilities Management, IT Services, Accountancy and Democratic Services). In order to minimise the impact of the scheme on the approved Capital Programme a Stage 1 funding application was developed and submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at the end of February 2018. The application for the scheme was rejected due to the fund being over-subscribed. The HLF were very supportive of the proposals and a bid to the fund was encouraged. However, the HLF has not encouraged a re-application. In order to explore further opportunities to attract external funding support for the scheme an expression of interest was submitted to Historic England for High Street Heritage Action Zone funding which included capital for Ashton Town Hall. The application was unsuccessful.
- 1.6 Since Executive Cabinet approval in June 2017 extensive survey work has been undertaken to establish the structural integrity of the building and the condition of the building's complex infrastructure. In July 2018, a pause was placed on the Capital Programme and a prioritisation exercise undertaken, which was then approved by Executive Cabinet in March

2019. The Ashton Town Hall phase of the Vision Tameside programme has an initial earmarked budget of £10m in the approved Capital Programme.

- 1.7 The plans drawn up in 2017 developed a model for Ashton Town Hall, which delivered the objectives of the Council at that time but leaving the Council with a significant ongoing revenue subsidy for the building. Although the scheme includes income generating opportunities, the scheme will not result in a significantly better pre closure revenue position. Further work is now required in order to establish alternative uses for the Town Hall which will improve its operational performance thereby minimising the impact on the Council's revenue budgets. The cost of market testing, estimated to be £0.100m, is to be funded from the scheme's current earmarked budget. This approach was approved at Executive Cabinet on the 24 July 2019. The need to undertake this work will inevitably result in delays to the full refurbishment scheme. Soft market testing has already commenced to better understand the commercial potential of the building. The information derived will be used to develop options for further consideration.
- 1.8 Any future plans for the Town Hall must consider the Council's commitment to recreate the Museum of the Manchester Regiment (MMR) in a re-visioned Ashton Town Hall. The MMR was founded in May 1936 and originally housed at the regimental headquarters, Ladysmith Barracks in Ashton-under-Lyne. The museum closed at the outbreak of war in 1939 and the collections stored in Wales. It reopened at the Barracks in 1948 and following armed forces reorganisations has been loaned to Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC) who opened the museum in Ashton Town Hall in 1987. The MMR closed in 2015 when the Town Hall was closed in preparation for its impending refit. The Museum tells the story of generations of Manchester Regiment soldiers through 200 years of service from 1756 until 1958 and up to today as part of the Duke of Lancaster's Regiment. The Regiment was based in Ashton and as a result the majority of its recruits came from the surrounding towns that now make up the Tameside area. The Manchester Regiment saw active service in World War One and the famous war poet Wilfred Owen was serving with the regiment when he was killed in action in 1918. The MMR collections are one of the key heritage assets of the Tameside area. They are a source of evidence and knowledge about the Regiment and the people who served in it. The collections therefore have a high social and community value as they relate to the descendants of those it recruited. The collections have both historic and in some cases artistic and aesthetic interest. Reference to the Museum of the Manchester Regiment is made at Portland Basin Museum with a display marking the 120 anniversary of the Boer War. The proposed consolidated cultural offer aims to provide a modern interactive environment which has a family focus, is dementia friendly and has an extensive activity programme. The re-interpretation of the Museum of the Manchester Regiment plans to provide an opportunity to display and access the collection in new ways and provide visitors with extraordinary experiences. Consultation with the MMR will continue as part of market testing commercial options.
- 1.9 The condition of the Town Hall continues to deteriorate due to the lack of operational mechanical and electrical infrastructure, the poor condition of the roof and the integrity of the rear elevations damaged as part of the TAC separation scheme. The condition of the Town Hall continues to give cause for concern and if significant work is not undertaken to the "envelope" in the short term then this significant heritage asset will be put at risk.
- 1.10 In order to arrest the deterioration of the building, which is likely to occur whilst alternative options are explored, it is proposed that governance be sought to undertake an "envelope" refurbishment/restoration scheme procured through the LEP. In order to further develop the envelope scheme the LEP will require a budget of £0.050m. The budget will be used to undertake any necessary surveys and establish a high level cost estimate along with a high level development programme to inform further governance.
- 1.11 In advance of the proposed envelope scheme emergency repairs works are required to the building parapet and roof. The cost of the emergency repair is estimated to be £0.120m.

- 1.12 It is proposed that a further £0.170m be released from the remaining earmarked budget of £9.900m. In addition, a further £0.100m is requested as a contingent budget which will mitigate any further delays if the costs of the emergency repairs increase beyond the projected budget.

2. EMERGENCY REPAIR WORKS

- 2.1 A recent visual inspection of the building parapet has revealed deterioration in the stone work leading to health and safety concerns. Further survey work, by a heritage building specialist, commenced week starting the 11 November. In addition to the deterioration in the parapet stone work a drone survey has highlighted the need for emergency repairs to the roof in order to arrest water leakage into the building. The cost of the emergency repair work, including access scaffolding, is estimated to be £0.120. However, this is subject to change following the additional survey work which commenced on the 11 November.

3. ENVELOPE REPAIR AND RESTORATION SCHEME PROPOSAL

- 3.1 The repair and restoration of the Ashton Town Hall envelope, in advance of a second stage internal refurbishment and remodelling, has the following advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages;

- **Arrest the further deterioration of an important heritage asset.** The Town Hall has been closed for almost 4 years. Its internal fabric is suffering due to the integrity of the envelope which is compromised in multiple locations. The deterioration is compounded by the lack of fully functioning mechanical and electrical systems throughout the building.
- **Will result in a redeveloped exterior in keeping with its Listed Building Consent.** The restoration and repair of the envelope has Listed Building Consent. Any future internal remodelling of the building is unlikely to change the envelope of the building significantly. This means that the envelope scheme can be completed in relative isolation from the 2nd stage internal redevelopment.
- **Working scaffold already in place to the rear elevations which can be utilised as a working platform.** The scaffold has been designed and installed to be a working platform for any refurbishment works to the roof and rear elevations. The scaffold contract will be novated to the main envelope contractor thereby accelerating the process of refurbishment.
- **Improved appearance of the Town Hall from Tameside One, Ashton Market ground and wider public realm.** The appearance of Ashton Town Hall is compromised by the introduction of scaffold and shroud to the rear elevations. The view from Tameside One and its public realm is managed to some degree with the introduction of the shroud. However, this was only intended to be a very temporary arrangement.
- **The building will become more marketable and more likely to attract commercial interest once the envelope has been fully restored.** The current condition of the building may inhibit the Council's ability to attract interest from potential investors. A fully restored envelope is likely to be more marketable.
- **Will facilitate the completion and the opening up of the public realm works/area to the front, side and rear of the Town Hall.** The completion of public realm works in the vicinity of Ashton Town Hall is being hindered by the scaffold to the rear elevations and the hoarding to the front of the building. A completed envelope scheme will allow for the opening up of entire public realm which will bring significant visual and economic benefit to the town centre.

Disadvantages:

- **Increased prelim costs for a 2 stage refurbishment.** The cost of a 2 stage redevelopment would be expected to increase the overall cost of the scheme. However, developing an agreed model for a single stage redevelopment will result in further delays to the essential envelope repairs resulting in further deterioration of the building. Further deterioration will inevitably lead to an increase in cost.
- **Extend the closure period of the Town Hall.** A 2 stage redevelopment will take longer to complete than a single stage development. However, at the completion of stage 1 (the envelope scheme) the Town Hall will be restored as the heritage “centre piece” in Ashton Town Centre with all the economic and visual benefits that brings.

3.2 The scope of the proposed envelope works are:

- **Roof overall including the removal and reinstatement of multiple M&E penetrations.** The roof is in poor condition. The internal spaces are deteriorating due to leaks which continue to arise. Water leaks are repaired when they become apparent but damage to ceilings and floor coverings will have already occurred. The roof has been compromised through multiple M&E 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 where the roof has been compromised.
- **Repair and restoration of the rear elevations including the option to include the new rear stair/lift core.** The Town Hall was closed in order to facilitate its physical disconnection from TAC as part of the administrative centres demolition and site clearance. The disconnection resulted in significant damage and scarring to the Town Hall’s rear elevations including the need for stabilisation and remediation works funded in part from demolition insurance provision. The rear elevations have multiple door and M&E penetrations which require significant repair and restoration.
- **Repair and cleaning of the front elevations including the parapet and Town Hall steps.** A recent inspection of the front elevation parapet has highlighted the need for repair and remediation of the stone work. A further survey of the stonework is being undertaken to establish the extent of the problem. A minor repair may be required in advance of the envelope scheme to prevent any further deterioration this winter.
- **Soft strip of the remaining M&E systems including any remaining asbestos.** Much of the buildings mechanical and electrical systems 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 M&E strip-out of the internal spaces be undertaken, as part of the envelope scheme, along with any remaining asbestos in readiness for the 2nd stage of the redevelopment.
- **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 a basic heating, ventilation and lighting in advance of any stage 2 redevelopment. This will also facilitate a safe and accessible environment which currently isn’t the case.
- **Glazed External Stair & Lift Enclosure.** To realise the building’s full potential and unlock the maximum occupancy of each floor plate, a new external stair and lift enclosure is proposed which provides level access to all floors. The glazed external envelope of the new stair enclosure, which has the necessary planning consent, will form a high-quality addition to the northern elevation linking the new Tameside One building with the historic Ashton Town Hall. It should be noted that while this will be the building’s functional entrance, the main civic entrance from the market ground will still be fully utilised and be promoted as the buildings main and historic entrance. In order to install the new glazed lift and stair core to the rear elevation the existing stair core will need to be demolished. In order to fully complete the envelope scheme and the public

realm works, the new stair and lift core needs to be incorporated in to the development at this stage.

- 3.3 If approved, the emergency repair will take place as soon as practicable. The work to establish a high level cost and programme will begin in January taking approximately 8 weeks to complete.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS & NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 The Ashton Town Hall phase of the Vision Tameside programme has an initial earmarked budget of £10m in the approved Capital Programme. From the earmarked budget £0.350m has been spent to establish the condition of the building, develop refurbishment plans to RIBA Stage 2, achieve Listed Building Consent and to install the scaffold and shroud to the rear elevations. In addition, approval has also been given to release a further £0.100m from the earmarked budget to explore and market test alternative uses for the building to ensure its longer term financial and heritage viability.
- 4.2 In order to minimise the impact of the scheme on the approved Capital Programme a Stage 1 funding application was developed and submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at the end of February 2018. The application for the scheme was rejected due to the fund being over-subscribed. The HLF were very supportive of the proposals and a bid to the fund was encouraged. However, the HLF has not encouraged a re-application. In order to explore further opportunities to attract external funding support for the scheme an expression of interest was submitted to Historic England for High Street Heritage Action Zone funding which included capital for Ashton Town Hall. The application was unsuccessful.
- 4.3 In order to further develop the envelope scheme the LEP will require a budget of £0.050m. This will provide the necessary surveys and such other information for the LEP to establish a high level cost and programme.
- 4.4 In advance of the proposed envelope scheme emergency repairs works are required to the building parapet and roof. The cost of the emergency repair is estimated to be £0.120m.
- 4.5 If approved the estimated timeline for the various elements of the scheme are as follows;

Emergency Works:

- Complete February 2020

Report on outcome of soft market testing and options for consideration including consultation with the Trustees of the Museum of the Manchester Regiment:

- Start November 2019 – Complete 4 March (Options report to Executive Board)

Establish plans and costings for the envelope scheme:

- Start January 2020 – Complete 1 April (Report to Executive Board)

Undertake envelope scheme if approved;

- Start April 2020 – Complete December 2020

Updates to Board

- 4 March 2020 & 1 April 2020

Updates to Executive Cabinet

- 25 March 2020 & 22 April 2020

Engagement with MMR

- November 2019 to December 2020

5 RISK

- 5.1 There are a number of high level risks associated with Ashton Town Hall;
- The building continues to deteriorate putting the heritage asset at risk. Any further delay will result in escalating refurbishment cost.
 - Continued delays to the Ashton Town Hall scheme will result in public dissatisfaction which includes Ashton Town Centre traders. Any delay in the delivery of the planned public realm works may impact on Council's plans to regenerate the town centre.
 - Continued delays to the Ashton Town Hall scheme may impact on the Council's perceived credibility with potential heritage grant funders in the future.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 As set out at the front of the report.