

## REPORT TO COUNCIL OFFICES SUB-COMMITTEE COUNCIL OFFICES RENOVATION PROJECT

**Report Reference** CO-21-01  
**Meeting Date** 25<sup>th</sup> April 2022  
**Agenda Item** 5  
**Prepared by** Town Clerk

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### 1.0 BACKGROUND

A business case for the freehold transfer of the Council Offices and Library Gardens from Cheshire East Council to the Town Council was approved by this council in 2016.

In 2018 the council commenced planning work on a renovation project. A project definition report was agreed in 2018; a user needs assessment along with member and officer workshops were undertaken to inform a brief for architects. In late 2018 Hayes and Partners were appointed as architects and draft plans for reconfiguration and extension to the Council Offices were prepared. In January 2019 the project was paused and no further work has taken place.

In November 2020, on the recommendation of the sub-committee council resolved to:

*approve recommencement of the work on the renovation of the council offices noting that the first stage would be a step 'backwards' to refresh the business case and determine whether a project to undertake improvements to the building is viable and that this stage would involve information gathering starting with a new structural survey of the building to identify all works required to bring the existing building to a 'modern office standard'.*

A new structural survey was undertaken in December 2020.

The sub-committee (meeting as the working group) previously agreed that the existing architect should be retained and that work to cost up the draft plans should not be undertaken without ensuring the specification is correct.

In 2021 a member briefing was held to update/inform members of the current status of the project and brief them on the draft plans. Following this briefing the sub-committee (meeting as the working group) agreed that the project should not resume, and no preparatory work should be undertaken, until the transfer took place.

The transfer took place in on 8th April 2022.

### 2.0 PROGRESSION OF THE PROJECT

Now that the transfer has taken place, it is prudent to recommence work on the renovations project. It is noted that one of the aims of the renovations project is to reduce the operation costs of the building by implementing energy efficiency improvements and providing desirable rental spaces to generate income.

Due to the period of time in which the project has been paused, the project governance documents

(project definition report and project plan) are outdated; it is therefore suggested these be updated and re-approved by the sub-committee.

The sub-committee (and Full Council) has previously resolved that the first stage in recommencing work on the renovation plans is to update the business case. It is recommended that the sub-committee aims to submit a recommendation to the July Full Council meeting.

The sub-committee should discuss any aspects it feels need particular attention in the updated business plan. The sub-committee should consider whether the existing plans should be subject to a quantity surveyor costing exercise to provide a more accurate estimate of the cost of works for the updated business case or whether further architectural design work needs to be undertaken prior to a costing exercise.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- a) The sub-committee aims to submit a revised business case to the July Full Council meeting
- b) That the Town Clerk be tasked with updating the project definition report, project plan and business case for sub-committee approval