

<b>Subject:</b>	Accommodation Options	<b>Status:</b>	For Publication
<b>Report to:</b>	Cabinet	<b>Date:</b>	27 <sup>th</sup> June 2012
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Head of Finance</b>	<b>Portfolio Holder:</b>	<b>Finance &amp; Resources</b>
<b>Key Decision:</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	<b>General Exception</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Special Urgency</b> <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Community Impact Assessment:</b>	Required:	Yes	Attached: No
<b>Biodiversity Impact Assessment</b>	Required:	No	Attached: No
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<b>1.</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
1.1	That Members approve a period of public consultation to 31 <sup>st</sup> October 2012 on the proposed options, which will also include a scrutiny meeting.
1.2	That following the consultation a further report is brought back to Cabinet later in the year, on which a final recommendation by Cabinet is made to Full Council regarding proposals for the Councils' properties as noted in paragraph 5.2 of the report.

**2. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

2.1 The purpose of the report is to approve a period of consultation on the various options available to the Council regarding the efficient use of its operational and surplus buildings.

**3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

- 3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:
- **A clean and green Rossendale** – creating a better environment for all.
  - **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy.
  - **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

**4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 All the issues raised and the recommendation(s) in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:
- Both adverse and positive reaction from customers & staff;
  - Disruption/loss to private paying tenants at the Business Centre, Futures Park Rossendale;
  - Increase in empty buildings;
  - Legal, planning consents or heritage restrictions on the use of buildings;
  - Public reaction to what may be perceived as local iconic buildings;
  - Implications arising from the Local Government Finance Bill and the retention of local business rates as from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 negating the benefits of reducing business rates currently incurred by the Council.

**5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS**

5.1 The Council has forecast in its Medium Term Financial Strategy the need to save in excess of £1m from its annual revenue cost base by 2014/15. As a result and as part of a series of measures the proposal is to review the Council's key operational and empty (or potentially surplus) buildings

5.2 The Council's key operational and empty (or potentially surplus) buildings are as follows:

- Rawtenstall One Stop Shop (OSS) (Capita and c. 38 council staff);
- Ex-Town Hall, Rawtenstall (empty property);
- 29-45 Kay Street, Rawtenstall comprising;
  - Rossendale Leisure Trust Head Office 45-41 (c. 6 staff)
  - one private tenant 31
  - empty 33-39 & 29
- The Business Centre, Bacup (serviced private tenants and c.61 Council staff);
- Stubbylee Hall, Bacup (Parks, Communities and People & Policy staff – c. 22);
- Liberal Club, Rawtenstall (empty);
- Henrietta St Depot, Bacup (c. support staff, direct operational staff, vehicles and equipment);
- Hardman's Mill, Rawtenstall (Short-term lease re Information & Communications Technology [ICT] hardware);
- 3, 5 & 6 Lodge Terrace, Rawtenstall (ex CPO residential property now part of preferred developer package).

5.3 It is estimated a rationalisation and consolidation of resources has the potential to save in the region of a net £145k per annum, before any rationalisation and capital investment costs. The net revenue savings opportunities are summarised as follows:

	£
Stubbylee	36,700
OSS	34,600
Kay St	19,300
Hardman's Mill	16,400
Old Town Hall	27,200
Liberal Club	11,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>145,700</b>

5.4 Other than the OSS all the above locations are non-customer facing locations, any changes proposed to these properties will have the following implications:

- Financial
- Legal (particularly in relation to restrictive covenants)
- Planning matters (Legal, Heritage, Conservation, etc)

5.5 Appendix 1 summaries a number of potential options available to the Council in relation to the assets identified, although it is acknowledged as a consequence of consultation these may be amended.

5.6 It is acknowledged the consultation surrounding the options will need to be detailed and will involve staff, trade unions, customer, stakeholders and members.

## COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS

### 6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 Should the Council proceed with any options, consideration should be made as to capital funding source in order to optimise positive revenue impact, e.g. use of:

- Available capital receipts;
- Internal borrowing and write off to revenue via Minimum Revenue Provisions (MRP) being offset against identified savings;
- Available Reserves.

### 7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 Legal comments are included with the report.

### 8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

8.1 The human resources implications will be understood and responded to as a consequence of the consultation.

8.2 The consultation and engagement which will be undertaken as part of the development of any proposals will support the Council's decision making process and ensure that the Council does give due regard. The Equality Act 2012 established the Public Sector Equality Duty, the duty requires the Council to give due regard to :

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

8.3 The amount of regard that is 'due' (that is, the degree of attention demanded by the needs) is set out in section 49 of the Equality Act and will depend on the circumstances of the case, the greater the potential impact of a decision, the greater the regard that must be had.

8.4 Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.

### 9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

9.1 The report is asked to approve a period of consultation across a number of groups. This will consist of, inter alia:

- Staff Consultation;
- Public and customer consultation;
- Partners / Potential Partners;
  - Green Vale Homes,
  - Lancashire County Council,
  - Citizens Advice Bureau,
  - Department of Works & Pensions,
  - Police,
  - Fire,
  - Health agencies
  - Whitworth Town Council
  - REAL / Community networks
- Heritage and Historical groups.

9.2 In order to support its decision making, the Council will utilise the outcomes from the recent Citizen Panel questionnaire (carried out March – May 2012) the results of which will be reported once the analysis has been completed.

9.3 A Community Impact Assessment has commenced and will be further developed alongside the period public of consultation.

**10. CONCLUSION**

10.1 The Council is again facing a significant financial challenge over the medium term. The review and rationalisation of its operational assets will assist the Council in realising some of its financial savings target.

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Various Property Working Papers	Head of Finance