

Item No. 20.	Classification: Open	Date: 18 March 2014	Meeting Name: Cabinet
Report title:		Walworth Town Hall – Agreeing the Way Forward	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		East Walworth, Newington, Cathedrals and Chaucer	
Cabinet Member:		Councillor Fiona Colley, Regeneration and Corporate Strategy	

FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR FIONA COLLEY, CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION AND CORPORATE STRATEGY

In July 2013 the cabinet agreed a high level vision to deliver a civic centre in Walworth that would set a new standard in creating a world class public place and requested officers to consult with local residents and interest groups further on their attitudes towards this vision. We are very pleased to present the results of this consultation feedback in this report which clearly demonstrates a high level of support. It is now the time to take the next steps forward in making this vision a reality. The council has already brought forward a new leisure centre for the area and this project will further develop the community infrastructure that is necessary to support the successful regeneration of the area. We will therefore take on board comments received to date and commence the process to select an appropriate design team to take forward the design of the project.

As stated in July we are absolutely committed to retain the much valued Grade 2 Listed Town Hall building and in addition, following clear feedback received during the consultation, we will now examine the possibility and feasibility of including the Grade 2 listed Newington Library building within this redevelopment project with the aspiration to deliver a centre which serves not just the local area but Southwark as a whole.

As demonstrated through consultation undertaken to date it is our absolute commitment to involve local people and groups at every step of the way and I am excited to announce that this will continue during the process to select architects with an exhibition that will provide residents with an opportunity to comment on proposals submitted by a short list of architects.

I now ask cabinet to agree the recommendations laid out in this report and approve the project mandate outlining the high level vision statements for each of the facilities and services to be accommodated within the development. This vision demonstrates our commitment to deliver a world class facility within the heart of the community and outlines the next important steps of this project.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the cabinet

1. Note the outcome of the Walworth Town Hall consultation exercise summarised in paragraphs 11 to 15 (and attached at Appendix 1) that was undertaken throughout October and November 2013 which endorses the strategic vision approved by cabinet in July 2103.

2. Agree the project mandate for the rebuilding of the Walworth Town Hall and in particular providing a high level brief for the following key facilities:
 - An enhanced library, a museum to house the Cuming and heritage collections, a cafe, a flexible event / community space including the provision for hosting ceremony's for the Registrar's service.
3. Note that the strategy for the selection of a lead scheme architect will include a design competition incorporating further public consultation.
4. Note that the Newington Library building will be incorporated into the scope of the project mandate to examine the benefits that the additional floorspace could potentially provide for the project.
5. Request officers to report back to cabinet in autumn 2014 with further information on design, budget, programme, results of public consultation and selection of architects.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Works undertaken on the fire damaged building to date

6. In July 2013 cabinet approved a high level vision for the Walworth Town Hall which included the following key priorities for the future use of the building;
 - An enhanced Library space.
 - A space for the display of the Cuming collection and potentially a Southwark museum
 - A flexible space that could be used for a variety of purposes including community and civic events, exhibitions and performances
 - Facilities for marriage, civil partnership and citizenship ceremonies undertaken by the Southwark registrar's service
7. Officers were instructed to agree a plan with the cabinet member for regeneration and corporate strategy for a consultation process to establish whether there was public support for the approved vision and to report to cabinet with the results of the consultation exercise and proposals for a full project mandate for the rebuilding of the Walworth Town Hall. This report is intended to provide this feedback and sets out proposals for the next stages of the project.
8. The July report also outlined the actions undertaken by the council immediately after the fire. Since July 2013 an extensive programme of remedial works and further surveys have been undertaken to secure the damaged Town Hall building and to protect the structure. These works are detailed in the project mandate [see Appendix 2]. The information drawn from the structural and building condition surveys will form part of the brief for the two stage architect selection process as detailed in paragraph 15 below.

Conservation and Heritage

9. The Walworth Town Hall is a Grade Two listed building. The recovery and remedial works undertaken to date have been carried out following liaison with English Heritage and the council's design and conservation manager. English

Heritage has visited the site and they have confirmed that they are satisfied that the works which have been carried out protect the building structure and internal historical features not destroyed by the fire.

10. Results of the architectural condition survey will inform the detailed brief for the procurement of architects and future design work to ensure that proposals work within the historical constraints of the listed building. War memorials within the Town Hall will be retained within any future scheme as they contribute to the heritage of this important building. In addition the council will be working with Lend Lease to consider the possibility of providing a new war memorial within the Walworth Square, to be delivered as part of the redevelopment of the Heygate Estate.

KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

Consultation strategy and results

11. A detailed overview of the consultation exercise that was undertaken throughout October and November 2013 is provided in Appendix One. 424 completed consultation questionnaires were returned during the two month period representing a 2.4% response rate from the 8403 questionnaires that were sent out to all residential and business addresses within the Elephant and Castle Opportunity Area.
12. When the respondents were questioned whether they supported the high level vision for the Walworth Town Hall, as approved by cabinet in July 2013, 94% answered yes (of those who answered either yes or no).
13. When asked to score each facility in terms of preference the respondents average score is as follows (with one being least preferred and five being most preferred):
 - Enhanced Library – 4.3
 - Museum to house Cuming Collection – 4.1
 - Flexible event space – 3.3
 - Cafe – 3.0
 - Registrar Service – 2.9
14. Therefore both the library and museum function were scored highly demonstrating significant support for their inclusion within the Town Hall. The average scores for the event space, cafe and registrar service were all around three therefore indicating neither strong support nor objection to their inclusion within the high level vision.
15. A frequent comment made during the community conversation event at East St market and also in several stakeholder group events was that respondents reported that it was difficult for them to comment without actually seeing any plans or details of the proposals. This highlights the importance of continuing the process of community engagement through the next stage of the design process. An approach to achieving this is discussed below in paragraph 16 and 17 below and in the project mandate document.

Design competition and selection of architects

16. The Walworth Town Hall project is a very significant scheme for the council. It provides an opportunity to provide enhanced public facilities for the local community which will contribute to the wider regeneration of the Elephant and Castle. In addition as already noted the building has a rich history and heritage making it an important local building. There will be strong community interest in the proposals for the site.
17. In these circumstances it is important that a suitably experienced architectural practice is appointed and that the programme provides local stakeholders with an opportunity to engage in the design process. The procurement of architects and other members of the professional team will be subject of separate Gateway reports in accordance with the council's standing orders. It is anticipated that the selection process will have two stages and will involve a design competition which would allow various approaches for the design of the new town hall to be tested. This approach will also provide members of the public and local stakeholders with an opportunity to influence the selection of the preferred design team.

Project Mandate

18. An initial project mandate has been prepared which will inform the architectural selection process. The starting point for the content is the cabinet's vision for the building which has been endorsed by the public. Details of the responses received from the public will also be included in the mandate. This vision statement has been further evolved by lead officers who are responsible for the various service areas. The statements are however still at a high level and will be developed further through an iterative process which will test scenarios and which will be informed by precedent studies. This approach will help the client team understand the spatial implications of the various uses and how these can be distributed within the available space. The mandate will therefore be developed in more detail as the project moves from the inception phase into the planning process. The content will be supported by detailed reports arising from technical surveys including those concerning conservation issues.

Newington Library

19. During the consultation exercise a number of respondents and stakeholder groups raised questions concerning the future of Newington Library and whether the future of this building would be considered as part of the design process which the council envisaged for the Walworth Town Hall.
20. Whilst not directly damaged by fire Newington Library did experience significant damage arising from water penetration. This has resulted in the building becoming unsuitable for use by either the public or staff. In order to ensure continuity of library services at the Elephant and Castle the council has entered into a lease for space within the Artworks scheme on Elephant Road. It is anticipated that this temporary facility will open to the public in the summer 2014. These premises which will be DDA compliant [unlike Newington Library] will be available for up to 5 years. This solution provides the council with sufficient time to design and construct a new facility within the Walworth Town hall.
21. The full extent of the damage to the fabric of Newington Library has yet to be fully established. A buildings condition survey is currently being undertaken

however specialist consultants have advised that the premises will take a minimum of six months to dry out. Newington Library does not have any public toilets and the staff referred customers to the public toilets located in the Town Hall which were open during office hours. Furthermore the means of escape from the rear of the premises is severely restricted. For these reasons it will not be practical to reopen the building to the public in the short term and any solution is likely to involve significant expenditure. Such a course of action would in any case be compromised by the rebuilding works to the adjacent town hall which is likely to adversely affect the use of the Newington Library building and which could require it being closed for temporary periods.

22. Cabinet is therefore advised that decisions on the future use of the Library should not be taken until more detailed information is available on the condition of its structure, and risks and costs are more thoroughly appraised.
23. The Newington Library and Walworth Town Hall are closely connected in physical and functional terms. In combination they form a collection of important local buildings with considerable historic and heritage value. The spatial implications of the councils preferred suite of uses for the Walworth Town Hall site will only be fully understood once the architectural process is underway. In these circumstances it has been concluded that the Newington Library should be included within the scope of the project mandate. It is anticipated that the selected architects will be required to appraise development scenarios to establish the extent to which the councils preferred uses can be accommodated in the parameters of the two buildings.

Programme

24. The programme for the commencement of design work is very much determined by the selection and appointment of architects. As noted in paragraphs 15 this process will involve a design competition and will be the subject of separate Gateway reports. It is currently anticipated that officers will be in a position to report back to cabinet during Autumn 2014 providing more information on the following;
 - Confirmation of the appointment of an architect following the design competition.
 - results of the public consultation undertaken as part of the design competition
 - A more detailed design brief for the project confirming whether or not the Newington Library is required in order to achieve the strategic vision for the building which has been endorsed through the public consultation.
 - An initial project programme against which design, planning and construction will be delivered against
 - A project budget for the design and implementation stages.

Policy implications

25. The adopted Elephant and Castle SPD (2012) identifies a vision for the opportunity area which is for the redevelopment into an attractive central London destination with excellent shopping, leisure facilities and cultural activities. In order to achieve this vision the document identifies a series of objectives including that of the provision of 'more and improved educational, health and community facilities which meet the needs of existing and future residents'

(paragraph 3.2.7). Agreeing the next steps in the rebuilding of the Walworth Town Hall will support this regeneration objective through the enhancement of the library and museum facilities.

26. The *Revised Office Accommodation Strategy* agreed by cabinet in November 2010 sets out a list of principles to guide decision making and design. These seek to ensure that investment in improving accommodation would represent best value for revenue spending and capital investment over the long term. The redevelopment of Walworth Town Hall will need to demonstrate that it supports the delivery of all of these principles and in particular achieves the following:

- Ensure that council facilities are welcoming and accessible to all residents, visitors and staff, conforming to high standards of disability access and customer service;
- Ensure that council presence is felt in all areas of the borough and that council staff and partners are well placed to understand and engage with local people;
- Ensure that the estate is flexible and adaptable to future needs;
- Reduce to a minimum the total number of administrative office sites to:
 - Minimise the revenue costs of managing the residual estate;
 - Minimise the future investment costs that would otherwise be required to maintain the retained estate and comply with modern standards of accessibility and sustainability;
 - Minimise the financial, reputational and human resources risks of operating from old and un-refurbished property;
 - Maximise the opportunity for modern ways of working, including the opportunities for work across departments and with partners in ways that better meet the needs of residents
 - Maximise the council's opportunity to improve environmental sustainability;

27. The Library Service review of 2011 gave commitment to retaining all 12 of Southwark's Libraries and to continue the modernisation of the library service. Newington is the borough's fifth busiest library and serves Walworth's diverse communities. There is significant demand for study space as well as access to IT and book stock. Young people make particularly heavy use of the library.

28. The Arts Council which now has responsibility for public libraries has recently issued a report called *Envisioning the Future*. The findings of the report are based on extensive consultation and research and identify four key ingredients for the library of the future. These are:

- Placing the library as the hub of the community
- Making the most of digital technology and creative media
- Ensuring that libraries are resilient and sustainable
- Delivering the right skills for those who work in libraries

The provision of modern, improved library facilities at Walworth Road would enable the implementation of these principles, carrying on the work already in place at other libraries in the borough.

29. The Cuming Museum is a unique repository of Southwark's heritage and gives access to important artefacts and objects from around the world. A new cultural

strategy for the borough was approved by cabinet in July 2013 and the museum is a key deliverer of the proposed action plan for heritage. It has only ever been possible to exhibit a very small percentage of the museum's collection and new provision will make possible to increase the amount of items on display and will benefit the museum's strong education programme

Community impact statement

30. The proposed redevelopment of the Walworth Town Hall is intended to provide a range of public services of benefit to the local community. One of the main objectives of the design brief for the future Walworth Town Hall will be to ensure the building is accessible to all members of the community regardless of age, disability, faith/religion, gender, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation.

Resource implications

31. The Regeneration North Team, within the chief executive's department, are responsible for leading the project through the pre planning and design process and for securing planning consent. Officer time required to manage the procurement process to select the design and professional team can be contained within the team's revenue budget. Once consent has been granted it is anticipated that responsibility for the scheme will transfer to the council's capital projects team for implementation.
32. A bid for the construction costs for the building has been made and will be considered as part of the capital programme refresh in March. An insurance settlement for the costs of the reinstatement works following the fire is also being pursued and the outcome of this process will reduce the call on the capital programme. As noted elsewhere in the report it is envisaged that a further report to cabinet in autumn will include more information on the construction budget for the scheme including professional fees and contingency.

Consultation

33. Initial consultation on the cabinet's high level vision for the project has taken place as set out in paragraphs 9 to 13 of this report. The purpose of this report is to agree a project mandate which will be used to inform the architectural selection process. As noted in paragraph 14 it is anticipated that the selection process will involve a design competition which is intended to provide residents and local stakeholder groups with an opportunity to influence the selection of the final design team.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Legal Services

34. This report seeks the cabinet's approval to a number of recommendations relating to the Walworth Town Hall. There are no specific legal implications regarding the approach noted in this report. Officers from legal service will continue to provide advice (when required) to the project, and particularly with regard to the forthcoming procurement for the section of lead scheme architect which is subject to a separate gateway approval.

35. The cabinet will be aware of the Public Sector Equality Duty in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. At each stage, in exercising its functions (and in its decision making processes) the council must have due regard to the need to:
 - a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation or other prohibited conduct;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - c. Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
36. The relevant protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy/maternity, race, religion/belief, sex and sexual orientation.
37. The cabinet is referred to paragraph 30 of this report which notes the community impact statement, and they should consider the equalities impact and issues when considering these recommendations.

Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services (FC13/090)

38. This report is seeking approval from cabinet to note the outcome of the consultation exercise and agree the project mandate on the way forward for rebuilding the Walworth Town Hall, details of which are outlined in paragraphs 1-5 and in the main body of the report.
39. It is noted that there are no immediate financial implications arising from this report as the staff resources required in the pre-planning and procurement process in the initial stages will be contained within existing departmental revenue budgets. It is also noted that a new capital bid is being submitted for approval at the March 2014 cabinet meeting, in funding the rebuilding costs of the Walworth Town Hall following the fire that occurred in March 2013. The total costs of the overall rebuilding programme will need to be closely monitored against the funding available.
40. It is noted that a further report will be submitted in autumn 2014 updating cabinet on the latest position on the overall scheme costs and funding. Commitments on contracts and other costs should only be commenced against confirmed and agreed funding.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
'Walworth Town Hall – A Strategic Vision for the rebuilt Town Hall' – Cabinet Report July 2013 (Item 14)	Regeneration North Team, 5 th Floor Tooley Street	Jon Abbott, 020 7525 4902
Link http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=302&MIId=4549&Ver=4		

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Walworth Town Hall Consultation Report
Appendix 2	Walworth Town Hall Project Mandate

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Fiona Colley, Regeneration and Corporate Strategy	
Lead Officer	Eleanor Kelly, Chief Officer	
Report Author	Jon Abbott, Elephant and Castle Project Director	
Version	Final	
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CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	Yes	Yes
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	Yes	Yes
Head of Culture , Libraries, Learning and Leisure	Yes	Yes
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
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