

Chichester District Council

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

22 March 2022

Scope for East Pallant House Options Appraisal

1. Contacts

Report Author:

Joe Mildred - Business Support Divisional Manager
Tel: 01243 534728 E-mail: jmildred@chichester.gov.uk

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the scope of the East Pallant House options appraisal and recommends it to Cabinet
- 2.2 That Cabinet is recommended to agree up to £20,000 from reserves to fund a third party to undertake the detailed valuation exercise to inform the options appraisal.

3. Background

- 3.1 Over recent years, the Council's office-based working has modernised and become more flexible. The office footprint has reduced, with space let to partners and tenants and there has been a move away from staff having their 'own' desks with hot desking now common place. The move to working flexibly has accelerated dramatically over the last two years with Covid restrictions requiring widespread homeworking. Most office-based staff now work from home for a proportion of their working week on an ongoing basis. As a result, the Council's future office space requirements are likely to be less, meaning that we could reduce our office space further.
- 3.2 East Pallant house is in the City Centre, within the City Walls and includes a listed town house that has had office space added to it over the years. The layout of the building (particularly the original part) is not effective for office use. It is not energy efficient and is expensive to run and maintain. The building has purpose-built Committee Rooms to hold public meetings and a large reception. East Pallant car park is immediately adjacent.
- 3.3 In the recent Future Services Framework prioritisation exercise undertaken by members, there was agreement that work on an options appraisal for the future use of East Pallant House and the Council's future office accommodation needs should be carried out.

4. Outcomes to be Achieved

- 4.1 The options appraisal should pull together the relevant information to allow members to make an informed decision on the future of the Council's office accommodation and the best use of the East Pallant site.
- 4.2 The options appraisal should consider the impact of the various options on the Council's customers, staff, its financial position (both capital and revenue), the environmental footprint, the impact on the local economy and the emerging Car Parking Strategy. There should also be consideration of the ongoing requirements of our current partner tenants.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 It is proposed that the options appraisal considers the options for the Council's future office requirements, with those requirements split into three main functions: customer facing / reception space, space for public meetings and committees and back-office space for staff. Each of these elements could be co-located as at present or be in separate, appropriate locations.
- 5.2 The options should explore the existing location (as it is or occupying a smaller footprint of the existing building with a view to letting additional areas), the potential for a new build on a separate site, any potential pre-existing office sites that could be purchased and sharing with local partners.
- 5.3 It is recommended that we instruct external agents to carry out valuations of the existing East Pallant site to include separate valuations for the different potential elements. We would also require indicative costs for a potential new build if an appropriate site can be located. It is recommended that Cabinet are asked to approve the funding of up to £20,000 from reserves for this work.
- 5.4 It is proposed that the relevant information is collated over the coming year and concluded in early 2023, with a final decision on the way forward being made by the new Council after the District Council elections in May 2023 and work undertaken to implement as appropriate at that time.
- 5.5 The elements of the project relating to the ongoing requirements of the Council's offices is to be led by the Divisional Manager for Business Support and those relating to the work to appraise the options for alternative sites and related costs and valuations is to be led by the Divisional Manager for Property and Growth.

6. Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 A full options appraisal is proposed and if any options are established as clearly unfeasible this will be outlined in the final report.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

7.1 The resource and legal implications will be key considerations for the options appraisal along with the other considerations set out in paragraph 4.2

8. Consultation

8.1 Consultation on the potential options will be undertaken with customers, staff, and members.

9. Community Impact and Corporate Risks

9.1 To be considered as a key part of the options appraisal.

10. Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder		x
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation Potential to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's buildings.	x	
Human Rights and Equality Impact An Equality Impact Assessment to be undertaken for any preferred option with a focus on accessibility.	x	
Safeguarding and Early Help		x
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		x
Health and Wellbeing		x
Other (please specify)		