

**Subject:** Accommodation

**Status:** For Publication

**Report to:** Full Council

**Date:** 19<sup>th</sup> August 2009

**Report of:** Head of Financial Services

**Portfolio**

**Holder:** Finance and Resources

**Key Decision:** Yes

Forward Plan  General Exception  Special Urgency

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide Members with further details on the accommodation option approved by the Cabinet in June 2009

**2. CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

2.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:-

- Delivering quality Services to our customers
- Delivering regeneration across the Borough
- Promoting the Borough
- Providing value for money services

**3. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS**

All the issues raised and the recommendations in this report involve risk considerations as set out below:

- Associated issues and uncertainties regarding a future Valley Centre redevelopment
- Due diligence regarding amongst other things revenue and expenditure of the Futures Park operation.
- Financial risks in the context of the Council's future financial position as noted in its Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- Costs associated with existing empty properties: Liberal Club, "old" Town Hall, Kay Street offices, Astoria.

- Legal Risks:
  - i. Futures Park building restricted to 33% public authority use
  - ii. TUPE arrangements
  - iii. Potential third party tenancy clauses on landlord transfers
  - iv. Stamp duty implications
  - v. No use of “Kingfisher” trade name
  - vi. Any planning restrictions or requirements associated with Council Chamber and the ICT suite

#### 4. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

4.1 In June the Cabinet considered the Council’s short and medium-term accommodation needs for its office functions. These consisted of three main options as follows:

**Option A** - Move the current Hardman’s Mill and One Stop Shop (OSS) operations (both customer facing and back office functions) to Futures Park

**Option B** - Move current Hardman’s Mill operations (civic suite and IT back office operations) to Futures Park, plus create a new Rawtenstall based Revenues & Benefits contact centre using current unused offices at Kay Street.

**Option C** - Vacate Futures Park and Hardman’s Mill and move back to Rawtenstall Town Hall and retain the existing OSS.

4.2 The Cabinet decision in June was to support **Option B** – to maintain a One Stop Shop presence in Rawtenstall for the Council’s customers, but to move the Civic Suite and the IT suite and the associated staff to Futures Park.

4.3 This option gave particular consideration the Council’s commitment to protect the provision of services to the existing small businesses within Futures Park in the current economic climate. To achieve this Option B involved the dissolution of the long-term lease of Futures Park to the current landlord and the transfer of staff and third-party tenancy arrangements to the Council.

4.4 The Cabinet decision was an approval of Option B in principle, requesting further investigation of the detailed requirements, costs and negotiations to be reported to Full Council for final project confirmation.

4.5 Since the Cabinet meeting a project team comprising of staff from across the Council has been set up to develop the project plan and work through the issues, requirements and timelines. This group has met weekly and made significant progress in defining the project submission.

4.6 Option B has been split into three distinct phases:

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Phase	Activity Details	Timescales
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Dissolve the lease with the current Futures Park landlord (<i>nb Landlord's legal entity: "Futures Park (Rossendale) Limited"</i>)</li> <li>- Transfer staff and tenants to Rossendale Borough Council,</li> <li>- Transfer of the Civic Suite from Hardman's Mill to Futures Park.</li> </ul>	<p>Winter 2009/10</p> <p>Spring 2010</p> <p>Spring 2010</p>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Create a fit-for-purpose IT Server Room within Futures Park</li> <li>- Move the Council's IT staff from Hardman's Mill and the OSS into Futures Park</li> </ul>	<p>Winter 2010/11</p> <p>Spring 2010</p>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify and develop a suitable alternative interim site for the OSS within Rawtenstall</li> </ul>	<p><i>The timescales for this phase are linked to the wider Valley Centre redevelopment and will not be actioned until a scheme is approved in relation to the Valley Centre</i></p>

4.7 Phases 1 and 2 can commence immediately and a project plan has been completed in accordance with the Council's project management methodology.

4.8 As stated above Phase 3 is very much dependent upon ongoing negotiations around the future development of the Rawtenstall Town Centre.

4.9 Exploring the time-lines for Phases 1 and 2 has resulted in the following conclusions:

- the Hardman's Mill Civic Suite lease is on a 6 months notice
- the Hardman's Mill IT Suite lease is due to end in Feb 2011
- given the anticipated length of the lead-in time (possibly 12 months) for the installation of circuits to Futures Park, Phase 2 (subject to para' 4.12.1) may need to begin immediately in order to avoid incurring further rental costs.

4.10 The costs anticipated in respect of Phases 1 and 2 continue to be reviewed in greater detail. Negotiations with the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) have been completed with Officers having confirmation that the Council does not face any risk of further grant claw back. With regard to the North West

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Development Agency (NWDA) there is no risk due to a 33% public sector occupancy limit, which the Business Centre, Futures Park is within.

#### 4.11 Details regarding Phase 1

4.11.1 Assessment of the implications of Phase 1 on the Council's customers has been made by the completion of a Community Impact Assessment, this is attached at Appendix 1. The findings of this assessment and the initial assumptions are summarized as follows:

- Of the 10 community groups identified 3 had a positive impact with the rest being neutral, therefore no negative impact was identified.
- Positive impact can be seen on: disabled, older people and other excluded groups.
- Moving to Futures Park, the Council Chamber will be moving to a relatively new building that was constructed under the new DDA legislation. Futures Park will therefore be an improvement on Hardman's Mill. Improvements for disabled users would include parking, access to the building, internal access, improved w/c facilities and improved lighting and security.
- Futures Park is sited directly on the A681 which has a quality bus service, the 464, running from Accrington to Rochdale. The service runs every 10 minutes until 18.48 hrs then every 30 minutes until 23.33 hrs. Prices from Rawtenstall are £1.90 single and £2.70 from Whitworth. Consequently, the building is more accessible and affordable to access.
- Hardman's Mill is a 15 minute walk from the closest bus route. Therefore the move to Futures Park would be a positive impact to all groups who do not have their own transport, particularly to the disabled, over 60's and those in receipt of a low income. Further, as most of the meetings are in the evenings the close proximity of the bus stop to the entrance of Futures Park, with the provision of excellent lighting and CCTV coverage, there is improved security.
- It is proposed that the impact on the black and minority ethnic (BME) community would be neutral because of the improved public transport to Futures Park and the enhanced security arrangements. This compensates for the change in location as the majority population of this group live in the Haslingden and Rawtenstall areas, being closer to Hardman's Mill.

4.11.3 The initial community impact assessment further proposes to consult with the relevant communities to determine if the initial assumptions are correct and to confirm that there are no negative impacts from the proposed changes

4.11.4 The Project Plan includes time for full consultation with users and interested groups on their expectations and wishes for the new Civic Suite. However, it would be impossible to make decisions through either Full Council or Cabinet within the time frames required. It is therefore suggested that the Accommodation Working Group consider the consultation responses and make the necessary decisions in order to create a Civic Suite of which the borough can be proud.

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4.11.5 Negotiations regarding surrender of the leases for the Futures Park Business Centre are already under way, with meetings having taken place with the current landlord. Any known cost implications have been factored into the business case and previously reported to Members.

4.11.6 Communications with staff and third party tenants affected have already begun, prior to the publication of this report, in order to manage the communication implications regarding this project.

4.11.7 The plans for relocating the Council Chamber and the ICT suite are likely to be the subject of a planning application for change of use. Final contractual negotiations will not be completed until the necessary planning consent is received.

4.11.8 The timescale for the completion of phase 1 is Spring 2010

#### 4.12 **Details regarding Phase 2**

4.12.1 With regard to ICT the timetable and details noted below they are subject to a further business case being developed as to the optimum financial and operational position regarding the location of the server suite, due to two recent developments:

1. Officers have recently completed favourable negotiations regarding current annual tenancy costs at Hardman's Mill.
2. The potentially less expensive option of relocating ICT serves back to Rawtenstall within the ground floor, old Town Hall, ICT room.

4.12.2 Subject to the conclusion of the 2 issues above and based on recent requests for installations, the anticipated lead-in time for the circuits to Futures Park is 12 months. Although this is a realistic estimate, there is a possibility that the installation could happen sooner; therefore the site requirements for new server room must be in place before the circuits are ordered. This results in a condensed period of activity in the early months of the project to assess the needs, design the server room and to perform any physical works required before the circuits can be ordered.

4.12.3 This will be followed by an indeterminate period of waiting for the installation of the circuits.

4.12.4 Finally another period of intense activity is likely in Winter 2010/11 in order to physically move the servers and systems from Hardman's Mill to Futures Park and test the new set-up whilst users are prevented from accessing the systems.

4.12.5 Any periods of service interruption will be kept to an absolute minimum, with work going on over the weekend, and the timings will be carefully planned to minimise disruption to services and customers.

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4.12.6 Some staff movements in relation to IT services will occur in advance of the circuit installations in order to provide the best service to managers and customers as soon as possible. These moves will link into the opening of the Civic Suite and the resulting adjustments in the requirements for meeting rooms at Futures Park.

#### **COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:**

#### **5. SECTION 151 OFFICER**

5.1 The financial business justification has previously been submitted to Members, via a confidential report to Cabinet in June 2009.

5.2 The report states that there is now no further risk of any grant claw back.

#### **6. MONITORING OFFICER**

6.1 The proposals involve change to the current Policy and Budget Framework and therefore any decision on this, other than maintaining a status quo, require Full Council approval.

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

7.1 Employment issues in relation to possible TUPE implications of employees who may transfer from Futures Park (Rossendale) Limited.

7.2 Option B is subject to consultation with employees and Trade Unions.

7.3 Equality implications and full consultation with the public would need to take place in relation to any possible move affecting the One Stop Shop (Phase 3)

#### **8. CONCLUSION**

8.1 That from a financial and operational efficiency view a favourable business case remains for a relocation of the Council's current Hardman's Mill functions to Futures Park.

8.2 In particular the project has considerable benefits to the local economy and the continued support to local businesses tenants located and potential new tenants of the Futures Park business centre.

#### **9. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

9.1 That Members confirm the Cabinet decision to pursue Option B.

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- 9.2 That Members approve the commencement of Phase 1
- 9.3 That Members approve phase 2 and its options implications, based on a final business case to be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of Council.
- 9.4 That Members delegate responsibility for decisions regarding layout, signage and access of the new Civic Suite at Futures Park to the Member Accommodation Working Group (4.11.4). This group to take into account the responses to a full consultation exercise with all members, users and interested parties.
- 9.5 That Members authorise the Chief Executive in consultation with Leader of Council to complete final negotiations with Futures Park (Rossendale) Limited.
- 9.6 That Members see this as a pragmatic, albeit, interim solution in reducing Council's own operating costs and supporting local businesses in the medium term. Longer term aspirations remain for a single site presence within a newly developed Rawtenstall Valley Centre.

**10. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT**

- 10.1 Directors, Heads of Services and Budget Holders.

**11. COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- Is a Community Impact Assessment required Yes
- Is a Community Impact Assessment attached Yes

**12. BIODIVERSITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment required No
- Is a Biodiversity Impact Assessment attached No

<b>Contact Officer</b>	
Name	Janice Crawford
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Service / Team	Financial Services
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<b>Background Papers</b>	
<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>
N/A	

## Community Impact Assessment Checklist & Signature Sheet

This should be commenced at the start of the Community Impact Assessment (CIA) process.

<b>Name of Strategy/Policy/Service or Function:</b>	Transfer of Civic Suit to Futures Park
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Initial CIA

Full CIA

Please check the following steps have been completed before signing below:

- Sections 1 to 4 completed
- Action Plan completed (where appropriated)
- Notified all relevant Officers/Service Areas/Partners

Signed: .....

Job Title: Facilities Manager

Department: Finance

Date commenced Assessment: 24<sup>th</sup> June 09

Date completed: 30<sup>th</sup> June 2009

Received by and date received in the People & Policy Team:

**Please sign the CIA as indicated above, retain a copy and send a copy of the CIA to:**

**Liz Murphy**  
**Head of People and Policy**  
**Rossendale Borough Council**  
**Stubbylee Hall**  
**Stubbylee, Bacup**  
**Rossendale**  
**OL13 0DE**  
[lizmurphy@rossendalebc.gov.uk](mailto:lizmurphy@rossendalebc.gov.uk)

**MANAGEMENT ACTION REQUIRED (to be completed by the Head of P&P)**

- Referred back to Assessor for amendment : (date)
- Refer to Committee: Cabinet August 2009
- Considered by Community Impact Assessment & Scrutiny Group: (date)
- Published/made publicly available on: (date)

Signed:..... (Head of P&P) Date:

Date of Review<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> This date will be set on an annual basis as default for review unless otherwise specified by you.

<b>Responsible Section/Team</b>	Property	<b>Version</b>	1
<b>Responsible Author</b>	Lee Childs	<b>Due for review</b>	31.8.2009
<b>Date last amended</b>	31.6.2009	<b>Page 1 of 4</b>	



## COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT INITIAL SCREENING FORM

<b>Name of Community Impact Assessment (the policy, decision, strategy, programme, procedure, action plan, function or service etc.):</b>	Transfer of Civic Suit to Futures Park	
<b>Officer Name(s):</b>	Lee Childs	
<b>Job Title &amp; Location:</b>	Facilities Manger , Futures Park	
<b>Service Area/ Team:</b>	Finance , Property	
<b>Telephone &amp; Email Contact:</b>	01706 252527 leechilds@rossendalebc.gov.uk	
<b>Date Assessment:</b>	<b>Commenced:</b> 24 <sup>th</sup> June 09	<b>Completed:</b> Ongoing pending further consultation

**Is the policy<sup>2</sup> or decision under review (please tick)**

New/Proposed

Modified/adapted

Existing

### 1. Scope of the Community Impact Assessment

The Civic Suit including Council Chamber is to be transferred to Futures Park, Bacup. The scope of this CIA is to assess the impact when the Civic Suit is used for public meetings on the target groups.

### 2. Aims & Objectives – summaries the main aims/objectives of the policy, decision, strategy, action plan, project or procedure (please refer to CIA Guidance for details)

As part of the first phase of Accommodation Strategy (option B) that was approved by Cabinet on the 18<sup>th</sup> June 2009. The Civic Suit that includes Council Chamber, Mayor Parlor Councilors Library and 25 seating board / committee room that is presently located within Hardmans Mill, Rawtenstall will be transferred to Futures Park Bacup. The aim of this project is to consolidate the Authority public buildings and provide more efficient and improved services for our customers.

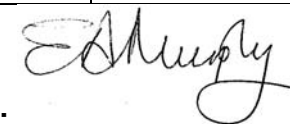
<sup>2</sup> Policy can be defined as a policy document, decision, strategy, function, service, action plan, programme, procedure, initiative or process.

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Date Issued: June 2009

Issued by: Head of People & Policy

<b>3. Impact – Could a particular group of people be affected differently in either a negative or positive way?</b>				
	<b>Positive Impact – it could benefit</b>	<b>Negative Impact – it could disadvantage/ affect differently</b>	<b>Neutral Impact (Neither)</b>	<b>Please indicate whether this is high (H), medium (M) or low (L). If a negative impact is identified please complete a Full CIA <sup>3</sup></b>
<b>Women</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Men</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Race (Ethnicity or Nationality) – BME or Majority Population - please state which group(s):</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>People with a disability (physical, learning/ mental health)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	m
<b>Lesbians, gay men and bisexual people</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Transgendered people</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Older people (60+)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	m
<b>Younger people (17-25), and children</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Religious / Faith groups<sup>4</sup></b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Other excluded groups : Cares , low income,</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	m



Is a Full Community Impact Assessment required? Yes:  No:  Head of P&P signature:

Lead Officer signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>3</sup> If you have identified any negative impact you *will* need to complete a Full Community Impact Assessment. If there are no negative impacts identified you do not need to complete a Full Community Impact Assessment.

<sup>4</sup> Faith groups cover a wide range of groupings, the most common of which are Muslims, Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Sikhs, and Hindus. Consider faith categories individually and collectively when considering positive and negative impacts.

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**Rational For The Community Impact Assessment To  
Transfer the Civic Centre to Futures Park**

**25<sup>th</sup> June 2009**

Monitoring forms are issued by Democratic Services to the public attending Council meetings, from the following target groups:  
12% where disabled, 25% over 59 years of age and 5% were Asian British, this also reflected the percentage of people who were of Muslim faith who used the Council Chamber. Gender usage was a 50 / 50 % split. Other groups where not represented.  
[237 Forms were collated over a three year period]

**Initial Assumptions:**

Moving to Futures Park, the Council Chamber will be moving to a relatively new building that was constructed under the new DDA legislation and will therefore be an improvement on Hardmans Mill. Improvements for disabled users would include parking, access to the building, internal access, improved w/c facilities and improved lighting and security.

Futures Park is sited directly on the A681 which has a quality bus service, the 464 running from Accrington to Rochdale. The service runs every 10 minutes until 18.48 hrs then every 30 minutes until 23.33 hrs. Prices from Rawtenstall are £1.90 single and £2.70 from Whitworth. Consequently, the building is more accessible and affordable to access.

Hardman’s Mill is a 15 minute walk from the closest bus route. Therefore the move to Futures Park would be a positive impact to all groups who do not have there own transport, but practically to the disabled, over 60 and those in receipt of a low income. Further, as most of the meetings are in the evenings the close proximity of the bus stop to the entrance of Futures Park; with the provision of excellent lighting, and CCTV coverage there is improved security.

It is proposed that the impact on the black Asian and minority ethnic (BME) community would be neutral because of the improved public transport to Futures Park, though the largest population of this group live in the Haslingden and Rawtenstall areas, which is located closer to Hardmans Mill than Futures Park. In addition, there are enhanced security arrangements in place.

**Proposed:**

It is proposed to consult with the relevant communities to determine if the initial assumptions are correct and confirm there are no negative impacts from the proposed changes.

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