



TODMORDEN TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL

REPORT AUTHOR	Colin Hill – Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer
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Date	26TH January 2022
SUBJECT	Town Hall relocation for Office Administration

PURPOSE:

1. To remind Members that at a meeting of the Town Council held on the 6th November 2019, the following resolution was passed:-

“That Todmorden Town Council agrees “in principle” to relocate its administrative office function to Todmorden Town Hall, and that the Town Clerk be authorised to enter into negotiations with Calderdale Council, and on completion of such negotiations, to bring back a further report for consideration before any final commitment is given”.
2. Since then further meetings were held at Officer level but curtailed following the impact of the Feb 2020 flooding event and Covid 19 on resources available to continue the furtherance of such discussions.
3. To remind Members that there is now in post a Climate Officer and with a proposed Project Manager in respect of the Town Deal Sponsor role, there will be 5 members of staff and possibly more.
4. The current office can accommodate three post covid, and whilst remote working arrangements are in place, nevertheless it is not felt to be as effective as having staff in one physical space.
5. To inform Members that following recent discussions, there is an opportunity now to progress this further, but is dependent upon the Town Council now committing to this proposed move in order for Calderdale MBC to now seek formal approval, including resource for necessary capital works to be commissioned to improve accessibility and security of the Town Hall, in order for the Town Council to formally occupy.
6. To seek from Members such formal approval, and to delegate to the Chair of Resources in conjunction with the Town Clerk, authority to negotiate the formal terms of occupancy, noting that 6 months notice will be required to vacate the

existing premises, unless the college were to agree an earlier release.

BACKGROUND:

7. Following the “in principle” agreement to take this forward, several meetings were held on site with Calderdale MBC to consider the practical arrangements of occupation and what if any, modifications may be needed to be able to make more readily accessible and increase the potential of the building to be used more.
8. Matters were progressing until the Flooding in Feb 2020 and then Covid 19 impact on Calderdale MBC resource- both physical delivery and financial ability to afford.
9. The proposal is that TTC will occupy rooms B & C within the ground floor of TTH. Room C will be the Town Councils main offices and Room B will be used for meetings (this is currently an extension of the Mayors Parlour/exhibition space for TIC tours).
10. Occupancy will be shared with CMBC Neighbourhood Wardens who only use the office infrequently. Given our close liaison regarding day to day issues often involve contact with them, this will help reinforce good working relationships.
11. It is proposed that the entrance off Halifax Road is used as the main point of access and this will be controlled by TTC during their hours of operation.
12. The following items or work were discussed as being required to facilitate occupation of the rooms outlined above.

➤ **Adjustments to outer doors**

- The existing timber doors are very tall and difficult to operate. They are currently fitted with fire escape / panic bar furniture. The proposed works would consist of reducing the door heights and creating a fixed weathered panel at the head of the doors.
- Door ironmongery will be changed to reflect revised operation / use
- A video entry system will be required so that visitors can call a member of TTC staff to let them in. The video element will enable TTC staff to see who it is that is requesting access.

➤ **Adjustments to inner doors**

- The inner vestibule doors are automated by use of a PIR detector and powered opening / closing arms. Adjustments will need to be made to the operation of these doors to tie in with the video access system and the new occupancy arrangements.
- Consideration will be given to some form of restricting access up the stairs to the ballroom

➤ **CCTV**

- TTC will require a monitor only CCTV camera located in the vestibule / lobby to monitor activity in that area. The video feed needs to go into room C. It may be possible to split the feeds of the already installed cameras to allow viewing only within room C. This will need investigation.
- IT System - Room C is already wired with data cabling to at5E standard and is linked to the CMBC secure network.

- Works will be required to partition these network ports off the CMBC network and form a separate network for TTC.
 - There will be a requirement for a new BT line into the building for TTC's connection.
13. With regard to furniture and fittings, Room C is fully equipped with modular desking for 6 people. If required a further two desks could be provided to add on to the system. CMBC have indicated these will be available for use by the Town Council and it is assumed that TTC will retain these desks for our use along with the chairs, at which stage we may need to consider what we do with our relatively new desks – may be possible to combine as separate meeting area/working area within Room B
14. In general terms Room C is fitted with LED flat panel lighting which is suitable for VDU usage. The room was decorated and re-carpeted around 5 years ago so should be suitable in the medium term. Room B was also redecorated and re-carpeted around 5 years ago so will also not need a refresh for a few years.
15. A sign will be required identifying the offices of TTC.
16. All Statutory Consents for this Grade 1 listed building including Listed Building Consent for any alterations or additions to the existing fabric of the building will be obtained by CMBC. From the list of works identified above there will be a need for CMBC to gain permission to:-
- Alter the outer doors
 - Alter the inner doors
 - Install a video access system
 - Install a CCTV camera
 - Erect signage
17. To prevent any undue delays and to recognise that we may need a softly softly approach and then once in occupation, find some improved ways to work:-
- The Town Council would occupy on the same basis as at Todmorden College, a formal agreement would be put in place.
 - Town Council to occupy on peppercorn rental basis – ie nothing
 - If by way of formal lease, then we will need to consider any potential tenant obligations.
 - Do not want any conditions other than perhaps redecoration/flooring costs
 - No utilities contribution – although would be reasonable if we were consuming more energy to contribute towards electricity costs.
 - No statutory obligations imposed.
 - We continue to pay for additional hires of rooms as at present
 - At this time additional use of space beyond rooms B&C would be via separate sessional hire agreement as currently takes place.
 - Continues to require CMBC staff attendance.

18. Policies and procedures will need to be reviewed and agreed upon (i.e. opening up/closing, loneworking etc.) considering also Covid 19 implications.
19. Experience of Remote working has at times been challenging in that: -
 - Connections to office networks often drop out and must be physically rebooted.
 - Line speed for working on the shared area is also slow, including uploading document for the shared area to work on
20. Accessibility to the current office can be limited to around 6pm . Relocation to the Town Hall would provide greater flexibility provided that : -
 - Unfettered access to premises is agreed – not requiring any CMBC presence.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

21. We have in place Earmarked a sum of £6,000 for IT Provision and £3,500 for Town Hall relocation.

RECOMMENDATION:

22. That Full Council confirms agreement to formally commit to relocation of the office function to the Town Hall subject to: -
 - a. Building works as proposed
 - b. No rental cost for Town Hall use as office
23. That agreement of leasehold terms with Calderdale MBC is delegated to the Chair of Resources in conjunction with the Town Clerk.
24. That any relocation /IT costs are met within existing Earmarked Reserves.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

25. To provide a formal commitment to relocate offices and provide the authority by which to enter into formal occupancy agreement negotiations.
26. To approve use of Earmarked Reserves

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

27. None directly arising from this report.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:

28. None

SUPPORTING PAPERS

29. None

For further information please contact : Colin Hill