

**MILESTONE 3 REPORT FOR THE ALCONBURY WEALD CIVIC HUB: CAMBS  
2020 PROGRAMME**

*To:* **Commercial and Investments Committee**

*Meeting Date:* **22 March 2019**

*From:* **Chris Malyon (Deputy Chief Executive)**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **N/a**

*Key decision:* **No**

*Purpose:* **To outline the design development of the Council's proposed Civic Hub at Alconbury Weald, since the last report in November 2018 and request authority to submit a planning application and complete the technical design and construction of the building.**

*Recommendation:* **It is recommended that the Committee;**

- a) approves the submission of a planning application, and completion of the technical design and construction of the building, based on the outcome of the developed design stage, approved budget and delivery programme outlined in this report.**
- b) delegates authority to the Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer to sign off the remaining milestone stages, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 In May 2018 Full Council agreed to support the Hub and Spokes model and sale of the Shire Hall site, choosing the new Civic Hub to be built in Alconbury Weald.
- 1.2 In November 2018 the milestone two update was presented to Commercial and Investments Committee, which outlined how the scheme had developed since the procurement of the design team and extensive stakeholder engagement. Subsequent approval was given for the project to progress into the developed design milestone three phase, alongside a revised budget of £18.3M.
- 1.3 Since then further stakeholder engagement has taken place to inform the development of the design to ensure it remains fit for purpose based on the needs of the organisation, Members and visitors to the building.
- 1.4 The intention of this report is to provide an overview of the developed design in order to seek approval to progress to the technical design and construction phase, where planning permission for the proposed development will also be sought.

## **2. MAIN ISSUES**

### **2.1 Design Development Update**

- 2.1.1 A number of steps have been taken since the last work stage to rationalise the building's layout as well as address stakeholder discussions with council staff. The two key changes include the relocation of the multi-function meeting room from the ground floor to the first floor of the west wing, and the rationalisation of space required for toilets and printing facilities in the east wing. These two decisions have resulted in a smaller footprint for the Civic Hub, allowing for a more efficient building.
- 2.1.2 The open plan office space will form the majority of the internal area and has been designed to provide maximum flexibility to the Council's staff, housing a total of 350 workstations. Alongside the workstations, the office area will include a number of staff meeting rooms, breakout and collaboration spaces and political group rooms.
- 2.1.3 The public-facing amenities of the building will include a large multi-function meeting room space at its heart, with capacity for Full Council meetings that take place six times per year. The room will spend most of its time subdivided into three separate meeting rooms, individually large enough to host Committee meetings, but will be predominantly used as large meeting rooms for general use. **Appendix B** of this report includes illustrations of these layouts.
- 2.1.4 The west wing of the building also includes a public reception, break-out area with refreshment facilities and further staff meeting rooms. The reception and foyer are designed as double-height spaces to emphasise their civic function and presence.

- 2.1.5 The gross internal floor area (GIFA) of the building stands at around 3,560sqm, which is in line with the client Brief of a maximum of 3,600sqm. The latest general arrangement floor plans and elevations for the building can be found in **Appendix A** of this report.
- 2.1.6 See **Appendix A and B** for the current design drawings of the ground and first floor levels of the building. **Appendix C** shows the front and rear elevations.

## **2.2 Public Information Event and Stakeholder Engagement**

### **2.2.1 Local community**

Design engagement has taken place with local community groups to ensure they have been kept updated with the process and had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on the designs. These took place on the following dates:

- Alconbury Parish Council – 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019
- Stukeleys Parish Council – 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Alconbury Weald Residents Forum – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2019

### **2.2.2 General Public**

The design and narrative explaining the development process were made available on the Council's website and sign posted through social media and a general media release. This garnered strong media outlet coverage from the local tabloid media across Cambridgeshire and BBC Radio Cambridgeshire.

Feedback and comment was encouraged using a specific email address.

A 'public information event' exhibiting the design was held on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 between 4pm and 8pm at the Club building in Alconbury Weald. Residents, members of the public and local businesses attended the event to talk to the project team, ask questions and leave their comments on the current plans.

### **2.2.3 Staff & Members**

A number of stakeholder engagement events have taken place to feed in ideas from staff and Members on the design of the new building. This has evolved the design over time into the building it is now, which is thought to be reflective of the needs of the organisation.

Engagement sessions with each of the political party groups have also taken place, giving an opportunity for input into all aspects of the design, particularly the general arrangement floor layout plans and multi-function room design.

From 1<sup>st</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> March the design was exhibited on the first floor of Shire Hall above reception, giving staff, members and the public the opportunity to review the current plans, ask questions and provide feedback.

### **2.2.4 Summary of Feedback Received**

We have categorised the main themes of feedback from all engagement activities below. The feedback was generally very positive and will also help inform the next technical design stage of the development.

#### **Building design and appearance**

- Attractive, modern building, the design and landscaping will fit nicely into the local area

- Fantastic development for the area, will attract other organisations
- Concerns around use of glass and how glare/heating will be managed
- Queries around security of the building/information security with glass windows
- Encourage additional breakout/collaboration areas which are well used in Shire Hall

### Travel

- Interested in the potential train station in Alconbury Weald
- While the site develops this will increase transport links, which is a positive aspect for the local community/businesses
- Need a plan for sustainable modes of transport (buses etc.)

### Parking

- Enforcement will be needed on site
- Interested in parking capacity and how this will be managed
- Need provision of motorcycle parking spaces

### Sustainability

- Positive to see renewable technologies being included

## 2.3 Cost Update

2.3.1 A breakdown [table 1] of the £18.3M approved budget is shown below and highlights any allocation changes, following completion of the design development stage;

	End of Previous Stage MS2 £ (millions)	End of Current Stage MS3 £ (millions)
Feasibility	0.137	0.137
Estimated Construction Cost	12.26	12.95
Construction Risk Allowance	1.2	0.91
ICT & Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment	2.0	1.6
Land	1.6	1.6
Other (including Fees)	0.81	0.81
Employers Risk Allowance	0.33	0.33
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>18.337</b>	<b>18.337</b>

Table 1; Budget Breakdown

2.3.2 The overall budget required remains unchanged, however it should be noted there have been changes within the budget lines as shown below:

- The construction contractor is now responsible for delivering the access control, fire alarm system and related equipment. This was originally budgeted to be delivered directly by the council within the ICT budget. This budget [£350k] has therefore been transferred to the construction

budget leading to no increase in overall budget required.

- b. Enhanced/increased construction costs relating to landscaping and building elevations following Design Quality Panel review and feedback.
- c. Need to attenuate surface water on site despite water being discharged to wider site lagoons (unforeseen at MS2).
- d. Enhanced Environmental Proposals including the introduction of external ducting for future electric vehicle charging and a potential future PV array in the car park, introduction of rainwater harvesting for landscape irrigation and increased Photo-voltaics to the roof.

2.3.3 The overall construction risk allowance for the scheme is now set at 7%, which is as expected at the end of the design development MS3 stage.

## **2.4 Environmental impact/sustainability considerations**

2.4.1 The proposed development has been designed to meet the current requirements of building regulations and planning standards for sustainability and energy. In addition to this, the scheme has targeted to exceed the minimum statutory requirements.

2.4.2 To achieve this, the environmental proposals for the building will better the building regulation energy documentation by 28%, targeting a carbon emission rate of 15kgCO<sub>2</sub> in lieu of the required rate of 21kgCO<sub>2</sub>. The proposed building also better the renewables targets set under the local planning legislation, providing a total of 30% renewable energy production against the required 10%. This is achieved by providing the maximum amount (around 300sqm) of photo-voltaics (PVs) on the roof of the building and the use of an air source heat pump for heating. The high efficiency low carbon technology will equate to a potential energy generation of 40,000kW hours per year, this will provide a projected energy saving of £4,720 per year.

2.4.3 The building has also been enabled for the future. The development has incorporated futureproofing to allow for further expansion of low zero carbon/energy production. This is manifested in external ductwork being designed for installation within the car park allowing for dual usage. These ducts will allow for an expansion in electric vehicle charging facilities (as this demand is likely to increase in the future) and also to facilitate the potential to increase PV's via a photovoltaic array to the car park incorporating a potential battery storage location. The Council is currently developing a separate business case to investigate the potential to add a PV array to the car park in future.

## **2.5 Travel and parking**

2.5.1 The new building will serve as the Council's 'Hub', and regular access to parking for staff, visitors and Members will be essential. Agile working by staff and partners, meetings and flexible working activities will take place in the building, as well as Committee and Full Council meetings.

- 2.5.2 There will be 350 permanent desks in the building catering for approximately 700 staff based at the site, working flexibly with hot desk arrangements. In addition to this, Full Council meetings will be held at the site which will generate a significant parking demand, whilst the nature of county council operations means that a much greater number of visitors will be present than would occur with a typical office development.
- 2.5.3 Approximately 200-230 car parking spaces are currently proposed, with the final figure under discussion, based on the council's needs and planning restrictions. The car park will include accessible spaces, spaces for pool cars and charging points for electric vehicles. 120 covered and secure cycle parking spaces for staff and visitors will also be provided within the car park area.
- 2.5.4 Alconbury Weald is a new town in its early stages of development. The Council's Civic Hub is included within phase 1 of the site, with the town centre and transport hub included within phase 2, immediately to the north east of the new building's location. Bus stops will be located on the boulevard directly outside the building and public transport services and general amenities will increase as the development progresses, creating the demand for their provision.
- 2.5.5 A Travel Plan will be agreed as part of the development and the council will work with Urban and Civic and public transport providers to develop measures to ensure a choice of sustainable travel modes.
- 2.5.6 The council believe this number of car parking spaces will be required on 'Day One', however, it is envisaged that as travel patterns and choice will change in the future, the layout of the site will allow for the car park to reduce if or when this becomes appropriate. This will be monitored by the Travel Plan Coordinator, who will be responsible for managing and updating the Travel Plan.

## **2.6 Social value in construction**

### **2.6.1 *Recruitment***

The Council's selected Contractor, RG Carter, is a locally-based firm with a locally-focused delivery model. Project & site management, and directly employed labour will therefore be intrinsically locally based.

A 'meet the builder' event or events will be held with advertised employment opportunities locally to the site at Alconbury Weald and Cambridgeshire generally. RG Carter would be happy to engage with the Council to further explore opportunities to link up with their priorities and policy initiatives. If barriers to local employment are identified these can be addressed in a targeted fashion.

### **2.6.2 *Improved Employability for Young People***

RG Carter has its own in-house training academy that offers craft apprenticeships and also degree apprenticeships in Construction Management or alternatively Quantity Surveying.

Local employment opportunities could be focused on younger people or linked in particular to educational institutions, for instance a STEM focused career day that linked educational workshops in the nearby iMET centre with potential for site visit(s).

R G Carter support EDGE's careers events throughout the calendar year and provide training and work experience opportunities on their projects at Alconbury Weald. (EDGE is a jobs and skills partnership that works with businesses at Alconbury Enterprise Campus and across the wider area to help them recruit and develop staff, and to help local people access the jobs coming forward.) The new civic hub also provides the opportunity for work experience placements. On the recently completed Clubhouse at Alconbury Weald, R G Carter provided carpentry and joinery students from Huntingdonshire Regional College (based just 10 minutes from site) with on-site experience as part of the National Skills Academy for Construction, and presented the students with toolkits on completion of their placement to aid their career progression.

#### 2.6.3 *Employment opportunities*

R G Carter support local groups and charities with regards to finding new employment opportunities and reintegrating persons into their working communities. For example, supporting members of the Build-Force charity, which helps members of the Armed Forces to transition back into civilian life following service via mentorship and work experience placements. Furthermore, Construction Ambassadors work with the CITB to promote construction and built environment careers to people of all ages, as well as persons attending 'Future First Expo' exhibitions to promote the construction industry to the long-term unemployed.

#### 2.6.4 *Ethical Procurement and Social Value embedded within the supply chain*

Ethical procurement and social value policies are communicated to potential supply chain partners /subcontractors for the project  
Explore opportunities to support Social Value creation through the supply-chain including local employment, skills and training, including upskilling, partnering with local charities or Council initiatives, environmentally focused initiatives.

#### 2.6.5 *Wellness*

Wellness has played a key part in the overall design and this is reflected in both the landscaped courtyard in the centre of the building – providing a casual spill-out area for all building users to mix in – and the balcony on the east facade, providing views out over the staff amenity garden and the neighbouring public open space.

The project team are applying the principles of the WELL Building requirements to the design of the building. Whilst the Council is currently not applying for formal accreditation (the brief is to comply with key principals only), the initial informal assessment is that the building would achieve 'Well Gold' standard with formal award ranging from 'Core' to 'Silver' to 'Gold' to 'Platinum'.

#### 2.6.6 *Building design*

The building provides full mobility impaired access which has been facilitated firstly by two fully covered and heated draught lobbies, providing the main entrance points and also the main traverse points between the two wings of the building. This allows for seamless covered transition between the wings for any mobility impaired persons wishing to use either of the building wings. In addition to this two fully disabled specification lifts (sized to allow for wheelchair access) allow access for mobility impaired people to traverse both floors, with a covered/enclosed bridge link at first floor, for the same purpose. Induction hearing loops are to be provided at the reception area and in the Multi-function room for hearing impaired persons.

Mobility Impaired Persons are able to evacuate the building, in the event of a fire, by making their way to the nearest evacuation lift, with one located in both the west and east wings of the building.

#### 2.6.7 Measuring Social Value

We will be instigating a KPI on local spend by producing data on the location of RG Carter's supply chain in relation to the construction site within a radius of 45 miles. RG Carter have undertaken this exercise on other projects, including Newark & Sherwood District Council. A target of over 70% of subcontractor orders placed with businesses within 45 miles of the relevant construction site was set and this was exceeded. A similar target is proposed for the construction of this building.

### 2.7 **Programme**

2.7.1 The programme has now reached Milestone 3 and the end of the Developed Design phase. At this point the design has reached the point of maturity that is sufficient for it to be the subject of a planning application.

2.7.2 Subject to Committee's approval to proceed, the early part of the next stage will involve the submission of this application in early April 2019, which is expected to be determined by the end of July 2019.

2.7.3 The technical design of the building will also continue, alongside further stakeholder engagement on the internal configuration of the space and consideration of the various furniture options. Subject to timely planning approval, construction is currently programmed to commence on site from November 2019 with completion expected in December 2020.

2.7.4 Reports to note which will return to Commercial and Investments Committee (to return if required outside of these dates):

- October 2019: Milestone 4 update – detailed design and final construction budget (prior to construction beginning)
- January 2021: Milestone 6 update – end of construction report



### **3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES**

The Cambs 2020 Programme is an opportunity to change the ways and places we deliver services to support the Council in the delivery of its corporate objectives by providing fit for purpose infrastructure, technology and a workforce that is equipped to face the organisational challenges that lie ahead.

#### **3.1 Developing the local economy for the benefit of all**

Through the distribution of services across the county, the Council will support economies in a more disbursed manner than at present.

#### **3.2 Helping people live healthy and independent lives**

Placing services in the heart of the communities they support will facilitate more citizens living independent lives by keeping them in their own homes with appropriate support networks wrapped around them.

#### **3.3 Supporting and protecting vulnerable people**

As above.

### **4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS**

#### **4.1 Resource Implications**

The project management, design and construction of the Civic Hub has been contracted to Faithful and Gould Consultants and RG Carter. RG Carter has subsequently employed Allford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) architects and others within their supply chain to design the building. The resources are therefore already engaged to ensure the building continues along its delivery programme through to completion and incorporated within the existing approved budget.

#### **4.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules Implications**

The consultants and contractor employed to deliver the new site have been procured through an existing council framework agreement.

#### **4.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications**

The planning application will be a regulation 3 application submitted to the county council for determination. The land agreement has been finalised and exchange will take place in the coming weeks, but completion remains subject to gaining planning permission.

A considerable number of risks remain for the building, however the remaining key risks are;

- The final construction cost exceeds estimates when tendered with RG Carter's supply chain.
- Obstructions in ground/poor ground conditions not reasonably established during design phase.
- Hazardous materials/contaminated land discovered during site activities which could impact cost/programme.
- Delay to securing planning approval.

#### 4.4 Equality and Diversity Implications

As part of the engagement process representatives from the Equality and Diversity network were invited to the design workshops to provide feedback. A separate session was also held with an established Equality and Diversity Action Group, which provided valuable feedback that has been incorporated into the design of the building. Examples of changes which have been made as a result of these groups feedback are as follows:

- Covered access routes in the external courtyard to make this space more accessible in poor weather
- The building length has been condensed, which reduced travel distances for staff/visitors
- ‘Superloos’ – unisex toilets are seen throughout the building which support transgender staff and visitors
- Colours and design features are planned to support those with visual impairments to navigate through the building easily

To comply with our duties under the Equality Act it has been agreed that we will complete and maintain an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) as part of this programme. The EIA will continue to be updated as the programme reaches its key milestones.

#### 4.5 Engagement and Communications Implications

There are no significant implications arising directly from this report.

#### 4.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement

Local engagement activities have taken place with the local community and all Members as outlined in the report.

#### 4.7 Public Health Implications

There are no significant implications arising directly from this report. Detail of Social Value has been included in section 2 of the report and reviewed by the Public Health contact.

Implications	Officer Clearance
Have the resource implications been cleared by Finance?	Yes Name of Financial Officer: Chris Malyon
Have the procurement/contractual/ Council Contract Procedure Rules implications been cleared by the LGSS Head of Procurement?	Yes Name of Officer: Jon Collins
Has the impact on statutory, legal and risk implications been cleared by LGSS Law?	Yes Name of Legal Officer: Fiona McMillan

<b>Have the equality and diversity implications been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Elsa Evans
<b>Have any engagement and communication implications been cleared by Communications?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Marc Mageean
<b>Have any localism and Local Member involvement issues been cleared by your Service Contact?</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Andrew Preston
<b>Have any Public Health implications been cleared by Public Health</b>	Yes Name of Officer: Iain Green

### **SOURCE DOCUMENTS**

<b>Source Documents</b>	<b>Location</b>
Milestone two report November 2018	Council Website - <a href="#">Link</a>

[illegible]

[illegible]



Appendix C – front and rear elevations

