

**TO: EXECUTIVE**  
**1 June 2021**

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**TIME SQUARE - CREATING A NEW COLLABORATION/COMMUNITY HUB SPACE**  
**Executive Director of Place Planning and Regeneration**

**1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1. To agree the scope of the Phase 1 works and funding outlined in this report, that have been developed to redesign Time Square (council offices) to create an integrated Community/Collaboration Hub. Creating a space which is shared with partners and by community groups, increasing co-location and partnership working.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. **The Executive Member for Transformation and Finance recommend that Council agrees a supplementary capital approval of £604k to fund the costs for Option 1 (Phase 1) of the Time Square project in the 2021/2022 capital programme.**

**3. Reasons for Recommendation**

- 3.1. The way in which the Council has operated during the pandemic has provided the opportunity for staff to carry out many of their duties remotely and work more closely with partners, enabling flexible and collaborative working. This report builds on the positive outcomes of remote working since March 2020, recognising that many staff will continue working remotely for a larger proportion of time. Accepting that when staff use Time Square this does not have to be in a traditional desk-based way.
- 3.2. Over the course of the pandemic it has been evidenced that the Council is at its most effective when working with partners, in particular across health and the voluntary sector. As such the co-location of such services is the next natural step in taking these relationships further forward. This also helps for the effective use of Time Square and will help in a small part to contribute towards the revenue costs required to operate the building.
- 3.3. The opportunity for a Community Hub space has been tested with internal stakeholders, partners and existing community groups, who welcome this move. The introduction of flexible space creating more of a community focus in the town centre rather than Time Square being just a municipal office.
- 3.4. In order to establish the Collaboration and Community space a capital allocation is sought to undertake works to the building to create;
- a new collaboration space on the Ground floor with a Café space;
  - a new Ceremony Room (for weddings, citizenship ceremony's etc)
  - a re-imagined reception and customer meeting area;
  - a new child conferencing room on the ground floor;
  - the First floor available for partners and future rental space; and
  - a new Board Room on the Fourth floor, enabling the use of the existing board room on the ground floor for community bookings.

All spaces furnished with new furniture suitable for collaborative working and informal meeting areas and spaces.

#### **4. Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1. The Council could do nothing with staff and Councillors returning to a pre Covid working pattern. This is not recommended due to the positive benefits which have emerged from the way the council has operated during this pandemic which would be lost under this option.
- 4.2. Decide not to create a Community Hub at Time Square and not to invite partners into the building. This is not recommended as the gained benefits laid out in this report would be lost and working with partners and community groups would revert to previous practices.

#### **5. Supporting Information**

##### Staff

- 5.1. The majority of the Council's staff are successfully working remotely at present. In considering a return to more office based working it is recognised that the workplace, should be a pleasant, flexible and effective place to work and collaborate. This changed way of working creates an opportunity to review the Council's current office accommodation needs and to develop a new future vision for Time Square. This change has enabled us to reimagine the space to create collaboration, partnership and touch down areas with an opportunity to release some office space to partners, enabling other functions/external bodies to be located within the building, allowing effective partnership working and enabling some efficiencies.
- 5.2. Analysis with staff on preferred working patterns has identified that many roles can be accomplished predominantly at home/remotely rather than being mainly office based. These have been tested through work pattern surveys and more recently interviews with Assistant Directors and service heads for each area to understand the working pattern of their staff and split between home/office. This approach aligns with the Councils Home Working policy agreed at Employment committee in February.
- 5.3. A collaboration space was highlighted in staff feedback as an opportunity to augment new ways of working, recognising the benefits this could bring, to staff, the Council and those using the council facilities. Being able to co-locate with partners was also considered to be a great benefit. The concept of this space and the addition of a Café space has been welcomed by staff and Councillors.

##### Partnership

- 5.4. The proposed operating strategy for the building would be;
  - to maximise effective use of the building, by creating collaboration spaces which encourage the co-location and close working between partners and Council services areas.
  - Lease/rent spare space within the building to partners.
  - to create a variety of spaces for community groups/partners and the council by the adoption of a Community/Collaboration Hub model on the ground floor.
- 5.5. This is an opportunity to bring staff and partners together to work in a different way and provide a location to connect with the community, either by co-location or by encouraging community groups to use the facilities at Time Square. By developing a hub at Time Square this provides a focus for residents, community groups and local organisations.

5.5. The Council has been speaking to the following partners regarding co-location in Time Square, including those in the health sector and in the voluntary sector.

Options

5.6. In order to progress the works needed to Time Square to support the creation of a Collaboration/Community Hub, a feasibility study was commissioned. The brief set out the following principles.

- Creation of a space which could be shared by the Council, partners and by community groups increasing co-location and partnership working.
- Creation of zoned collaboration spaces and a café area, which would be shared with partners, supporting integrated working and closer staff collaboration.
- Time Square to be redesigned to enable the community to book meeting spaces on the Ground Floor of the building including the Council chamber.
- Creation of a larger ceremony room to increase income from ceremonies.
- Letting of First Floor North to Involve, freeing up the old Magistrates Court
- Potentially letting of the First Floor South to an external partner/s or organisation/s (costs for set up are excluded from this report) is being currently considered, providing a rental income opportunity.

5.7. The study also proposed internal layouts for each floor and considered the different type of furniture to improve the working environment for both staff, partners and customers. (See Appendix A).

5.8. Interviews were held in November with senior leaders and others to ascertain the level of home, office work split. It is assumed the in the region of 400 desks would be required to meet new ways of working. The proposal at the moment is to extend that to 465 desks to ensure flexibility can be accommodated as we learn from any return to office-based working.

5.9. Most services have indicated a reduction of desks being required, however to allow for flexibility, for additional staff that may need to return to the office, the total number of desks available for BFC staff is 465 as set out in the table below. This will be reviewed once staff return and we can see how the space/desks are used. Teams across the council will have team zones and these have been accounted for in the planning of the individual floors.

<b>South</b>	<b>Dept</b>	<b>North</b>	<b>Dept</b>
Ground Floor	Civic & Community Space (furniture layout shown in Appendix A)	Ground Floor	Collaboration Space/Café/Ceremony Room
First Floor	Potential Rental Space	First Floor	For use by Involve & Charities organisations,
Second Floor	People Directorate (incl CCG)	Second Floor	People Directorate
Third Floor	Delivery Directorate	Third Floor	Place Planning and Regeneration Directorate
Fourth Floor	Leadership Space	Fourth Floor	Resources Directorate

## Costs

- 5.10. The table below sets out the estimated costs for the phase 1 building works and furniture purchase required to create the Collaboration/Community hub

<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Building Works</b>	<b>Description of Works</b>	<b>Furniture Cost</b>	<b>Description of Furniture</b>
Ground North	£201,941.00	Post Room, Facilities, Café, Collab Space, Waiting Area, external works, wayfinding	£119,840.00	Collaboration Furniture, includes café
Ground South	£49,980.00	Reception & Lobby Decoration and finishes	£4,680.00	New reception desk
Fourth South	£22,950.00	New Board Room	£7,150.00	Board Room furniture
Prelims & Contingency	£75,719.00		-	
General Costs	£63,136.00	Fees (Internal and External) & Third Party Surveys	£8,000	Delivery & Installation
ICT Costs	£50,000.00			
Total	£463,726.00		£139,670.00	
Total Project Cost			<b>£603,396.00</b> <b>say</b> <b>£604,000.00</b>	

- 5.11. It is proposed the first phase of the remodelling works to create the spaces as set out above, will be completed by the end of October 2021 to enable a phased return of staff into the building subject to any Covid restrictions in place at that time.

## **6. Consultation and Other Considerations**

### Borough Solicitor

- 6.1. There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

### Director of Resources

- 6.2. The financial implications are included in the body of the report, which require consideration of a supplementary capital approval to provide the necessary funding.

### Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.3. There are no strategic risk management issues identified in this report at this time.

### Environment and Climate Implications

- 6.4. The recommendations in section 2 above are expected to have a reduction on emissions of CO<sub>2</sub>, as a result of Involve and charities moving out of the Court House. With a reduction in staff travelling to work on a daily basis this will reduce car-based emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> generated by our staff.

### Health in all Policies

- 6.5. The changes to Time Square will help to further enhance partnership working with Health colleagues, the voluntary sector and community groups. This will enable closer and joined up working on projects and programmes beneficial to improving the health of the wider community. It also seeks to enable further opportunities for health and well-being activities for the users of the building.

### Background Papers

Appendix A - Architectural Concept Layouts

Appendix B - Equalities Assessment

### Contact for further information

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