



**Title:** Call-in of Cabinet Decision 5 July 2023 - Customer Services Relocation

Options: Relocation Timeline

**Lead Officer:** Steve Partner, Head of Neighbourhood and Assets

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillors Davison and J Harrison

**Public / Confidential report –A confidential Appendix Exempt from Publication under Paragraph 3.**

**Wards of the District directly affected:** None

Contrary to the policy framework:

Contrary to the budgetary framework:

Key Decision:

Included within the Forward Plan:

Equality Impact Assessment Undertaken:

Consultation & Community Engagement:

Final Decision:

Accessibility checked:

#### **Officer/Councillor Approval**

<b>Officer Approval</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Name</b>
Chief Executive/Deputy Chief Executive	25/7/23	Chris Elliot/ Andrew Jones
Programme Director for Climate Change	25/7/23	Dave Barber
Head of Service(s)	25/7/23	David Elkington Graham Leach Steve Partner
Leadership Coordination Group		N/A
Section 151 Officer	26/7/23	Andrew Rollins
Monitoring Officer	25/7/23	Andrew Jones
Finance	26/7/23	Andrew Rollins
Legal Services		
Portfolio Holder(s)	25/7/23	Cllrs Davidson and Harrison

## Relocation Timeline

### 1. Introduction

In February 2023 Cabinet agreed a report (Agenda Item 10) to relocate WDC staff and services currently based in Riverside House (RSH) into four relocation sites (detailed below). The relocation work aims to achieve vacant possession of the Riverside House site allowing for its sale and disposal consequently enabling the Council to reduce its ongoing accommodation costs within the smaller, more efficient new sites.

- Site 1 - Saltisford One (S1) – to be used as the primary work base for staff.
- Site 2 - Town Hall (TH) – the rooms previously let to the University of Warwick on the ground floor to be used to house the Corporate Support Team (CST), primary postal deliveries, Evidence Store, PACE room, and provide additional office space and meeting rooms.
- Site 3 - Pump Rooms (PR) – the existing shop space to be used to house the Customer Services (Reception) function.
- Site 4 - Kennedy Square (KS) – to be used to house the in-house print room function.

Since February staff have been preparing these sites in readiness for staff to move in. As a separate yet linked project, Officers are also progressing the sale of Riverside House site.

The current accommodation costs for RSH are estimated at circa £750,000 pa. The revised accommodation costs once the Council has relocated for the new sites are estimated at circa £325,000 pa. Whilst accommodation costs will reduce after the Council has moved out of RSH, the Council will retain residual accommodation costs for RSH until completion on the sale of the site.

There are further details included within the confidential Appendix 2 setting out Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). While the Council holds this information, to disclose this at this time could have significant impacts for the Council. However, this can be reviewed for public release if/ when the Council completes the disposal of Riverside House.

A critical workstream to achieve the relocation is the ICT infrastructure. This involves creating a new data centre/ server room in S1 to replace the server room in RSH. Additionally, new links need to be established to the S1 data centre from not only the relocation venues but also all of the Council's other remote sites (e.g., the Crematorium, the Spa Centre, Acorn Court and so on). Hence this is a large and complex piece of work.

The timeline for installation of the ICT infrastructure is fluid, due to ICT service providers standard practice of not providing precise dates to carry out works. For example, providers give a basic 90-day timeframe for installation for new links but do not provide any more information or provide advance notice of when works will take place.

Vacant possession of RSH cannot be achieved until all the ICT links are connected to S1 so that the server room in RSH can be switched off, with the S1 new data centre and associated links ensuring business continuity. Given the difficulties in pinning down the ICT timeline, this means that the timeline for relocation has had to be based on several estimates and assumptions, utilising the best information available to Officers.

## **2. Relocation Timeline**

The information below describes the estimated timelines for each of the four relocation sites. As stated above each site is dependent on when the ICT infrastructure can be installed. Where other dependencies exist, this is described below in the relevant section.

Additional consideration is other matters which will impact the relocation timeline, including the ICT timeline, a requirement to find an alternative location for Council committee meetings during the Future High Streets Works to the Town Hall and additional factors affecting vacant possession of Riverside House.

The current timeline for achieving vacant possession of Riverside House is estimated at mid-February 24. This assumes that the current call-in process will add approximately four weeks to the work and that the move to the relocation sites as identified in February Cabinet report proceed as previously agreed.

A high-level timeline summary table is also provided for reference to support this paper (see Appendix 1). For the reasons described above the dates and durations are estimates reflecting the best information available at the time of writing. The table also reflects projects agreed by February Cabinet paper. It does not include timelines for additional options for use of TH and/or PR.

### **Relocation Site 1 - Saltisford One**

#### **S1 – Building to provide new principal work base for Council staff.**

- Lease starts: Aug 23.
- Site preparation excluding ICT infrastructure: Estimated completion Sept 23. Minimal works are required to prepare building. These include minor decorations, fit out with furniture and equipment.
- ICT installations - Estimated completion Nov/ Dec 23.
- Staff move in - End of Jan 24.

#### **Dependencies/Risks**

- Dependent on ICT installation.

### **Relocation Site 2 - Pump Rooms (NB Listed Building – requires consent for internal and external changes)**

### **PR – Option 1 (Customer Services goes into PR as per Feb 23 Cabinet report)**

Timeline revised to allow for call-in process. Estimated to conclude end Jan 24.

- Listed Building Consent achieved – End Oct 23.
- ICT infrastructure works complete – Nov/ Dec 23.
- Building Works complete - Jan 24.
- Staff move in – End Jan 24.

### **PR – Option 2 (Customer Services goes into alternative location not in PR)**

An estimated 11 months are required to deliver a new scheme to house Customer Services in an alternative site, based on work starting mid-August 23 and new centre opening mid July 24.

Work would include:

- Site identification and feasibility
- Member approval
- Design development
- Planning permissions
- Procurement
- Building/refurbishment works etc.
- Staff move in/centre.

#### **Dependencies/Risks**

- Risk – high level of uncertainty for timeline given the unknowns for this work.
- Costs of alternative location currently unknown.
- See Confidential Appendix 2

### **Relocation Site 3 - Town Hall**

There is a separate, yet linked project planned for the TH referred to as the Future High Street Funds (FHSF) works. This is to refurbish parts of the TH to create a Creative Hub to house creative and arts enterprises. The FHSF works are estimated to take place October 23 – Summer 24. Assessments have been undertaken to establish whether the various current TH tenants can remain *in situ* during the FHSF works period. The current understanding is that FHSF works will **not** prevent occupation by the Council of the University area during works period.

**TH - Option 1 (As per Feb Cabinet report – to house CST, postal address, Deed Store, PACE room, Evidence Store, officer desk and meeting space)**

The current scheme does not require internal changes and the estimated timeline is for staff to move in during Jan 24.

- Minor refurbishment works (decorations) - Sept 23.
- ICT infrastructure - by Nov/ Dec 23.
- Staff Move in – Jan 24.

### **Dependencies/Risks**

- CST move to TH needs to happen simultaneously to Print Room move to KS to facilitate joint working practices between the two teams.

**TH - Option 2 (Use to host Customer Services)** NB: This is a departure from previous Cabinet decision and was **not** recommended by Officers in the February Report.

This work is estimated to take circa 8 months to include the activities listed below. However, a new customer services centre could not open until after the FHSF works are completed. The FHSF works are anticipated to complete Summer 24, meaning that a new Customer Services located in the TH would be more likely to open Sept 24.

Work includes:

- Feasibility
- Possible Member approval
- Design
- Planning Permissions
- Procurement
- Works
- Customer Service Centre

Locating the customer services function in the TH is also highly likely to generate an additional project, namely, to find a new location for the CST team, postal delivery location, an evidence room and PACE room, additional meeting rooms and office space. This is because it is unlikely these functions/services can all be accommodated elsewhere in the TH, and especially during the FHSF works. It is challenging to estimate a timeframe for this additional project, however circa 6 months is suggested for planning purposes.

### **Dependencies/Risks**

- Option 2 is dependent on completion of FHSF works, to allow safe access to members of the Public. FHSF works are currently estimated Summer 24 at the earliest.
- Risk of delay/cost increases required to identify alternative locations for CST and other services.
- See Confidential Appendix 2

### **Relocation Site 4 - Kennedy Square (New Print Room)**

As per the February Cabinet report, a Council owned asset formally used by Housing Service, has been converted to accommodate the Council's large printers. The work is largely complete except for the ICT installations. The estimated move in date is Jan 24.

### **Dependencies/Risks**

- Dependent on timescales for CST to move to their new location, as for operational reasons teams need to move simultaneously. A delay in housing CST (see above) will delay Print Room move to KS.
- See Appendix Two

### **ICT infrastructure timeline**

This is a large and complex workstream. As described above assumptions have had to be made about when this work will happen. Based on the information available the following describes the working assumptions. Current estimated indicates work completed Dec 23.

- Server installation and configuration Aug – Dec 23
- Internet circuits – Relocation Sites - Nov 23
- Internet circuits – Existing sites - Dec 23
- Server switch off RSH - Jan 24

### **Dependencies/Risks**

- See Confidential Appendix Two

### **Council Committee meetings**

During the FHSF works it will be necessary to relocate the Council meetings as the access arrangements during the works will mean the site is unsuitable for the number of attendees to the meetings. An options appraisal to find an alternative venue for the meetings is currently underway. One option is RSH. This is not desirable, however if no alternative is found it may need to be used. It is currently estimated that Council meetings will need to be displaced between October 23 and Summer 24.

### **Dependencies/Risks**

- The displacement of Council meetings is dependent on the FHSF works programme. If the FHSF works are delayed, this will extend the period when potentially the Council meetings need to be held in RSH. This would create a risk of delay for leaving RSH and/or sale of RSH.

### **Riverside House Vacant Possession**

The current timeline, based on relocating as per the agreements made by Cabinet in Feb 23, is that vacant possession of RSH **is estimated for mid Feb 24**. This allows for staff and services to move out of RSH, the ICT switch over of the server room and the final clear out of the building.

Additionally, Bowls England (BE) currently occupy office space on Level 2 of RSH. To achieve vacant possession the lease with BE will be terminated. To assist BE, Officers are progressing plans to convert the first floor of the tennis pavilion in Victoria Park to provide alternative accommodation. This requires a planning permission for a change of use. BE understand that the Council has no obligation to support BE to secure alternative accommodation and have agreed to not to delay the Council's departure from RSH.

### **Dependencies/Risks**

Timeline is dependent on:

- PR Option 1 being implemented.
- TH Option 1 being implemented.
- BE vacate RSH.
- ICT infrastructure work can be completed as per current working assumptions.
- Council committee meetings do not need to be held in RSH.