

KETTERING TOWN COUNCIL

REPORT FOR DECISION

Item No:- FC22/18

Committee:-	Finance and Governance Committee
Date:-	22 nd June 2022
Author:-	Martin Hammond, Clerk
Report Title:-	Accommodation
Wards Affected:-	All

1. Purpose of Report

To set out the options for sourcing new accommodation for the Council.

2. Recommendations

That

3. Information

3.1. As members were advised at Annual Council, the Council has been advised that its lease will not be renewed after the end of October 2022. This affects

- the office – approx. 250 sq m
- access to the mayors parlour – approx. 175 sq m
- the cost free use of the Chamber, and committee rooms for evening meetings

At this stage, NNC cannot guarantee us access to the Parlour or meeting rooms after 1st November. Any use of NNC's meeting rooms after 1st November will additionally attract a user charge.

3.2. Therefore it is necessary to agree

- a) what accommodation we require in future
- b) the preferred location
- c) the financial envelope to work within

4. TYPE OF ACCOMMODATION

- 4.1. The ideal arrangement would be somewhere which provided an office, a room which could function as a Mayor's Parlour and enough space for most committee meetings. That would mean that only Council meetings and Town meetings would have to be in locations hired for the purpose (see below). It could be possible to find space which was multi-functional – e.g. an office which was also a parlour or a parlour which could also be used as a meeting room.
- 4.2. To re-provide the parlour and its contents in another location would require a space approximately the same as now – 175 sq. metres but an office could be about 15-20 sq metres and still be comfortable. A minimum size of meeting space for committees would be about 200 sq metres.
- 4.3. Meeting space for committees and Council meetings should also allow for the same quality of audio visual presentation as now – this enables the council to have paper free meetings and to present information accessible to the public as well as members. Without a specific investment in equipment, venues for meetings will need to already be equipped with an audio visual set of facilities to avoid having to revert to paper agendas and papers.
- 4.4. Access to toilets and a kitchenette would also be necessary, and parking if outside the Town centre. The accommodation can be unfurnished.
- 4.5. Any location where the Mayoral regalia, chains, mace and plate were stored would need to be secure enough for insurance and security purposes.

5. LOCATION

- 5.1. Given the focus of much of the Council's activity and to assist visitors, a location in or close to the town centre would be preferable, but this will often come with a premium. Station Rd and Headlands also offer office accommodation which is very close to the town centre. Outside the town centre, office provision is greatest on the Pytchley Rd estate and in North Kettering Business Park, although that is outside the town boundary. Very little else appears to exist elsewhere.

6. COSTS

- 6.1. The Council pays £12000 a year currently for its accommodation within the Municipal Offices. The commercial rate locally for office accommodation is around £12.50/sq foot, which for an office of the size we currently have would cost £3,500, and for a parlour would be £22,000 or thereabouts. This assumes the rent includes for rates, utilities and broadband. Some accommodation – for example in Headlands – is however currently available for £8400 per annum which whilst not as large as we might wish, would be functional.
- 6.2. Hiring a meeting room from NNC would probably cost about £100 a time – given we have 40 meetings a year in the diary, then we need to minimise this habit if we can.

7. OPTIONS

7.1. The following broad options exist – several of these potential venues have been approached and visited as will be outlined verbally at the meeting.

7.2. OFFICE AND PARLOUR WITH SOME MEETING ROOM CAPACITY

<u>Venue</u>	<u>Features</u>	<u>For</u>	<u>Against</u>
Corn Market Hall	Office, toilets, kitchenette and access to meeting rooms Possible use of a further room as a parlour NNC owned	Town centre location Prominent well known building Relatively under used now	Owned by NNC and managed by legacy leisure, who may not have a long contract in place, so only a short term lease might be possible. Might be security issues
Kettering Conference Centre	Offices, toilets, kitchen facilities, and meeting facilities	Good quality facilities Good parking	Some way from town
Toller Church Rooms	Office, toilets, kitchen, meeting facilities	Town Council facilities Some parking Good quality meeting space Potential to use meeting space as an occasional parlour	Will need Elders' consent to lease the office space on a long term basis
Maplefields Community Centre , Britannia Rd	Large sports hall with ancillary space that would need converting by the Community Association	Good parking Some meeting capacity although would need equipping	Some way from town. Currently in need of extensive conversion works, and provision of utilities and broadband Might not always have compatible uses within it.
Business Exchange , Rockingham Rd	Space large enough for office and parlour possible; some meeting capacity.	Close to town centre Good parking Modern facilities	No availability at present.

Chesham House	Variety of spaces which could accommodate office and parlour NNC owned	Close to Town centre	No ground floor accommodation and no disabled access Limited parking No meeting capacity
Bespoke offices on employment estates	Could provide office, parlour and meeting rooms	Purpose built Good parking	Probably unaffordable
Converted office space eg Headlands and Station Rd)	Could provide office space but less likely to provide a parlour space or meeting space example:- Headlands, Kettering Office to rent - £700 pcm (£162 pw) (onthemarket.com)	Close to Town Centre	Might not be the most useable of spaces. Limited parking

7.3. MEETING ROOM CAPACITY

- 7.3.1. The best option would be to continue to use NNC space for all our publicly accessible meetings- this would cost about £4000 a year, but would avoid the need to buy and install audio visual equipment to support paper free meetings. Its availability is however dependent on NNC being willing to rent out its space.
- 7.3.2. A secondary choice is to relocate all meetings to one identified venue in town, one which is equipped with all the necessary facilities – tables, chairs, IT equipment - and which has space for the public.
- 7.3.3. A third choice is to rotate meetings around a number of venues but this would add to set up costs and time each time, and again would need a minimum level of facilities and sufficient parking.

8. Consultation and Engagement

None

9. Finance, Legal and Resource Implications

- 9.1. The Council will from 1st November have £5000 in its budget for the remainder of that year to pay for accommodation and meeting space – that is £1000 a month.
- 9.2. In addition, we will need to factor in the costs of moving furniture, equipment and Mayoral assets.
- 9.3. There may be insurance cost implications of moving to a new building in respect of all the Mayoral assets.
- 9.4. Finally, there is an opportunity cost of relocating office in terms of time and effort securing new premises, moving to them and notifying change of address to all interested parties, suppliers, government agencies etc.
- 9.5. This report has not explored the possibility of acquiring a freehold property because of the implications for borrowing that that would entail and the likely time it would take.

10. Policy Implications

The Council's corporate plan says

1. *The Council will function as efficiently and effectively as it can, as a steward of the public money with which it is entrusted.*
2. *It will operate a paperless office*

