
Report to Cabinet - Part A

Corporate Furniture

Portfolio Holder:

Cllr Arooj Shah, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Reform & Regeneration

Officer Contact:

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Report Author:

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21 August 2023

Reason for Decision

In order to complete the transition phases of a number of projects relating to corporate accommodation under the Creating a Better Place programme and ensure that New Ways of Working are adopted, the Council requires much of the corporate furniture to be relocated, repurposed and recycled. This will allow the new workspaces to become functional allowing staff to decant out of the Civic Centre over the next six months and members over the next 2 years into new accommodation. New furniture will also be required to allow the new spaces to operate effectively.

This report seeks approval to enter into a new contract with a furniture supplier following the completion of a mini tender process. The framework will operate for a four-year period in order to meet the timescales set out within the programme.

Recommendations

The Cabinet are requested to agree the following;

- Note the contents of this report
- Approve the repurposing and recycling proposals in this report regarding the existing corporate furniture to support the transformation of corporate accommodation under the Creating a Better Place Programme and delegate authority to the Executive Director for Place and economic Growth to finalise and implement the disposal, recycling and repurchasing recommendations in section 1 below.

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- Delegate approval to the Executive Director for Place and Economic Growth to approve the award of and the entering into of a call-off contract for the supply, delivery, and installation of office furniture as and when required over a 4 year term for the new Spindles Workspace Project following the completion of the procurement exercise set out in section 2 below.
 - Delegate authority to the Director of Legal Services and his nominated representatives to carry out all necessary legal formalities.

Corporate Furniture

1 Background

- 1.1 To strengthen our “new ways of working”, the Council is introducing a more flexible and modern office environment to strengthen service delivery and meet the expectations of our workforce, partners, members and residents. The approach will enable us to reduce our corporate estate, repurpose sites for development, release efficiencies whilst retaining at the forefront our ‘Resident First’ focus including increased local delivery, for example through the roll out of Family Hubs and Place Based Community Hubs across the borough.
- 1.2 Cabinet will be aware that within the Creating a Better Place programme, there are a number of accommodation projects in delivery and form part of our significant investment in key assets across Oldham ensuring utilisation is maximised and they remain sustainable for the future.
- 1.3 The table below details the key assets currently undergoing refurbishment and are programmed to complete within the next two years.

Project	Estimated Completion Date
Beever Family Hub	July 2023
Alexandra Park Eco Centre	Late 2023
Town Centre Workspace (Spindles)	January 2024
Royton Town Hall (Community Hub)	Spring 2024
Chadderton Town Hall (Community Hub)	Spring 2024
Market, Events and Archive	Spring 2025
The Old Library	Spring 2025

- 1.4 Aligned to the capital works underway we have a requirement to invest in new office furniture and as detailed within the main body of the report any existing furniture will be repurposed and recycled wherever possible. Furniture is a corporate resource that is managed by the Facilities Management team.

Impact of New Ways of Working

To strengthen our “new ways of working”, the Council is introducing a modern flexible office environment aligned with the expectations our workforce and partners that retains our Resident First approach at the forefront.

The new design of our accommodation has been informed by our workforce and partners including consultation events and feedback on their experience within the Spindles accommodation trial space. The feedback received has been assessed and where appropriate incorporated into the design of the wider Spindles accommodation scheme due to complete at the end of December 2023 with the accommodation principles being rolled out across our corporate estate moving forward.

Our workforce has adapted well to the new ways of working with a large proportion no longer working from a dedicated desk within an office environment for the majority of their working week. This has helped to foster a positive organisation of collaboration and cross organisational working within the Council. In consultation with services and partners we are

vastly reducing the number of 'traditional desks' and increasing collaboration and hot desking provision. The approach enables our staff to make informed choices on the most suitable location and setting to complete a task for the benefit of our residents.

Staff could for example work at various times in the new Spindles workspace, at home and potentially at one of the Place Based Community hubs across Oldham. In addition, there will be more modern, flexible options for staff to work from depending on the type of tasks they may be completing. These include:

- Collaborative spaces, to encourage increased cross team and partnership working
- Informal flexible seating, an alternative to more formal settings
- Hot-desking, to allow staff space to 'touch down' if they need to catch up quickly on emails
- Single Person meeting pods to concentrate on writing a report or make a confidential call
- In addition, there will be desks to allow staff to work in a traditional manor when in the office for longer periods of time

The new design will strengthen welfare facilities, encouraging staff to take regular breaks to help build resilience and support health and well-being. The new workspaces respond to the changes in work practices locally, nationally, and internationally that that council has embraced to ensure that it can offer a positive environment ensuring it offers a modern, comfortable and inspiring environment to retain and attract a talented workforce.

Existing Furniture Stock

- 1.5 The current furniture within the Civic Centre was purchased as part of a refurbishment project over 11 years ago supporting a very different and now outdated way of working. The majority of the furniture (desks, office chairs, storage units and associated meeting room furniture) is traditional, functional, and compliant with Health and Safety requirements. However, some of the furniture is now tired after extensive use over many years and reaching end of life, for example gas canisters in office chairs are beginning to fail.
- 1.6 There is also a significant amount of larger "spider" style desks that do not make the optimum use of the space within new and refurbished buildings and are too large to fit into the new workspaces.
- 1.7 The majority of the existing furniture will not support new ways of working or compliment the significant refurbishment investment underway. Therefore, it is proposed to invest in new quality furniture to support our new ways of working and to safeguard staff against potentially musculoskeletal injury where possible and managing the council's liability. Investment of this nature will also mitigate future cost exposure with the majority of existing furniture considered to be at 'end of life'.
- 1.8 Over the last six months an inventory of all the existing furniture within the Civic Centre has taken place and each piece of furniture has been identified and numbered. The furniture has also been measured and a quality assessment carried out. This inventory has informed where some of the existing furniture can be reused in schemes including the Spindles Workspace, Old Library, Alex Park Eco Centre and Royton Town Hall. This approach has reduced the amount of new furniture needed to be purchased on each of the projects.
- 1.9 Redundant furniture from the Civic Centre has already been repurposed into other schemes including Placed Based Community hubs and Family Hubs such as Failsworth Town Hall, Chadderton Town Hall, and Beaver Children's Centre.
- 1.10 As the refurbishment projects progress, the Facilities Management (FM) team will seek to repurpose as much of the existing furniture as possible. However, it is anticipated that there

will be a significant amount of furniture that is surplus to requirements. There are a number of options for disposing of this furniture which include:

- Seeking to donate furniture to other public sector organizations, such as schools and NHS partners.
- Seeking to donate furniture to local (Oldham based) community groups / charities
- Potentially sell any good quality furniture on the second-hand market to offset some of the costs. (Though it is noted this is unlikely to bring in a significant receipt)
- Working with other national charities who can recycle furniture at home or abroad for good causes.
- Offering furniture to staff to use when working from home.

1.11 If there are any damaged, stained or furniture surplus after the above measures have been actioned, furniture will be dismantled into all recyclable components, i.e. wood, metal, plastic to ensure it can be recycled and disposed of in the correct manner.

2 Current Position

2.1 To complete the projects set out in 1.3 above there is a requirement to invest in some new furniture and to maintain and replace in the future as time goes on, to ensure that the council has a resilient and consistent approach in procuring furniture as a corporate resource. As such the project managers have worked closely with the FM team and Procurement colleagues to undertake a comprehensive mini tender process under an existing Framework Agreement to select a suitable supplier for a period to cover the next four years.

2.2 The tender competition is being run using the YPO framework for Office Furniture Solutions and Associated Services (1074) under there are 10 suppliers; all of which have the opportunity to submit a tender. The specification details requirements for the following projects as well as the general corporate contract for ad hoc requirements:

- Town Centre Workspace
- Royton Town Hall
- The Old Library

2.3 The opportunity was advertised via the Chest on 28th June 2023 with a return date of 28th July 2023. The following criteria has been published as a means of evaluating the submissions:

Quality	20%
Social Value	10%
Price	70%

2.4 The current timescales indicate that for a 'ready to go live' date for the Spindles Workspace project of 1st January 2024, orders will need to be placed at least 12 weeks prior; this puts an order date of August 2023 at the latest. In order to achieve these timescales and obtain the necessary approvals it is requested that delegated approval is to be given for the award and entering into of a call-off to the Executive Director for Place and Economic Growth. The Council's requirements would be met by drawing down from the call-off contract as and when furniture is required over the 4 year term.

2.5 The table below details the current procurement timetable:

Activity	Date
Publish Further Competition	28 th June 2023
Clarification Deadline	12 th July 2023
Further Competition Deadline	28 th July 2023
Evaluation	4 th August 2023
Moderation Meeting	3 rd August 2023
Internal Approval	25 th August 2023
Contract Award	29 th August 2023

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 Option 1: Accept the recommendations: To approve the proposals regarding existing furniture stock and proceed with the contract arrangements for a preferred furniture supplier for the next for years will allow the objectives around corporate accommodation within the Creating a Better Place programme to be realized. This includes decant staff and services from the Civic Centre into the new workspaces at Spindles, Old Library as well as PBI Community Hub sites across the borough, which aligns to the council's residents first approach.

Option 2: Do nothing - Not to approve the proposals regarding existing furniture stock and purchase the new furniture requirement would not allow the council to achieve all the required desks within the new Spindles workspace and the objectives would not be achieved with the existing corporate furniture. New furniture would be bought on an "ad-hoc" basis reacting to failures without a certain consistency of supply in place.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 1 – To approve the proposals regarding existing furniture stock and proceed as set out in the Recommendations of the report and approve the repurposing and recycling of furniture to staff, community and charity groups, and the contract award to purchase the required furniture to support New Ways of Working to facilitate the corporate accommodation changes under the Creating a Better Place Programme.

5 Consultation

5.1 The types of furniture required for the Spindles project has been specified by Interior Design Consultants and has been review and amended by the Project Team and FM team following feedback from staff who have been using the phase 1 "trial" workspace within Spindles. Feedback has been given by staff on the overall look and feel of the space, as well as its operational functionality. Lessons learned have been incorporated into the phase 2 Spindles workspaces. (Chris Lewis – Strategic Lead for Creating a Better Place)

6 **Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The procurement of an Office Furniture supplier should ensure that the Council achieves Value for Money on any necessary purchases of furniture for planned office moves and other more ad hoc replacements as necessary.
- 6.2 Where the furniture replacement forms part of an initial fit-out (such as Spindles), costs will be Capital Expenditure and will need to be funded from within the existing Capital Budget for each of the relevant assets.
- 6.3 Ad hoc routine replacements will generally be Revenue expenditure and the costs will need to be met from within the Corporate Landlord Revenue Budget.

(James Postle)

7 **Legal Services Comments**

- 7.1 The YPO Framework Agreement for Office Furniture Solutions and Associated Services (1074) commenced on 22 June 2021 for an initial term of 2 years with the option to extend the expiry date twice, each time by 1 year. The first extension has been applied. The Framework Agreement has been designed to provide customers with a fully tailored office furniture solution. Therefore, the 10 suppliers appointed under the Framework Agreement are all office furniture companies.
- 7.2 The Council is in the process of undertaking a mini competition with all interested framework suppliers taking part in order to achieve the most economically advantageous offer in respect of the Council's requirements. The mini tender process is being carried out in accordance with the process laid down in the Framework Agreement. Further, the mini competition is subject to the advertised form of call-off contract and call-off terms and conditions, which were reviewed by Legal Services prior to the commencement of the mini competition.
- 7.3 A mini competition and subsequent call-off contract is a viable route to market under Rule 4 of the Contract Procedure Rules provided the Framework Agreement is procurement compliant. Legal Services has confirmed it is compliant.
- 7.4 If the mini competition process is concluded in compliance with the terms of the mini competition and the advertised award and scoring criteria are applied correctly, the legal implications of the proposed recommendations should be minimal. Legal Services should be instructed to ensure the call-off contract is populated and completed correctly.

(Sarah Orrell – Commercial and Procurement Solicitor)

8. **Co-operative Agenda**

- 8.1 Relocating, repurposing and recycling existing furniture in the Civic Centre aligns with the Council's Co-operative agenda as this proposal will make financial savings by supporting Council Services and community organisations by providing high-quality, professional furniture, allowing services and organisations to continue delivering high quality services. It is a good example of partnership working.

(Mahmuda Khanom, Policy Support Officer)

9 **Human Resources Comments**

9.1 Not applicable

10 **Risk Assessments**

10.1 The Council is required to ensure workplace furniture particularly seating complies with The Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992. Reviewing the existing furniture and reusing where appropriate and purchasing new where it is damaged or out of date complies with this requirement. The mini tender process under an existing Framework Agreement provides adequacy from a procurement perspective in relation to the purchase of the new workplace equipment. The reuse and recycling of existing furniture is in line with the Council's Environmental Policy.

(Vicki Gallacher, Head of Insurance and Information Management)

11 **IT Implications**

11.1 IT Implications are relevant to the wider workspace project, and council furniture has been specified in line with the IT provision currently available to staff. This will include electric power to desks to support the use of IT Equipment.

(Lindsey al Basri)

12 **Property Implications**

12.1 Furniture is treated as a corporate resource and is managed by the Council's Facilities Management Service, which sits within the portfolio of Property & Projects. Although furniture itself has no implications for the use of property itself, the move to Spindles and subsequent decant of the Civic Centre cannot be achieved without the recycling of old furniture and purchase of new.

(Katy Webster - AD Property & Projects)

13 **Procurement Implications**

13.1 The Commercial Procurement Unit supports the recommendation outlined in the report. The process undertaken so far has been done in line with the framework conditions and the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and will continue to do so.

(Emily Molden)

14 **Environmental and Health & Safety Implications**

14.1 As part of the procurement process, all new suppliers have been scored on their green credentials and ability to supply a sustainable product. The majority of furniture is seeking a new home where possible. Those items which are broken and are not able to be repurposed will be broken down and recycled where possible.

(Andy Hunt)

15 **Equality, community cohesion and crime implications**

15.1 None

16 **Oldham Impact Assessment Completed?**

16.1 No – an EIA is not required, as this proposal does not affect any vulnerable residents or groups. However, assistive / adapted furniture items have been included within the specification to support staff with various physical / mental health requirements.

17 **Key Decision**

17.1 Yes

18 **Key Decision Reference**

18.1 NEI-11-23

19 **Background Papers**

19.1 None

20 **Appendices**

20.1 None