

**PART A) – SUMMARY REPORT**

**1. SUMMARY OF MAIN PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 That the Council takes the following steps to continue to work with partners and the community to return Dawley Town Hall to community use which will:
- Provide support to the Dawley Town Hall Steering Group and Dawley Regeneration Partnership to establish the Dawley Town Hall Trust
  - Provide a lease for the management of the building to the 'Dawley Town Hall Trust' via Dawley Regeneration Partnership
  - Allocate £120,000 towards the refurbishment costs
  - Support the 'Community Trust' to access other funding streams including an application to the Big Lottery

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Council continues to work with the Dawley Town Hall Steering Group, Dawley Regeneration Partnership, Partners and the Community to return Dawley Town Hall to community use to include support to secure additional funding and to establish the 'Dawley Town Hall Community Trust' under the umbrella of Dawley Regeneration Partnership to manage the building in the future.
- 2.2 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Property & ICT in consultation with the Cabinet Member for The Environment, Cooperative Council and Partnerships to negotiate and agree terms of an appropriate lease for Dawley Town Hall with the Dawley Regeneration Partnership or Dawley Town Hall Trust.
- 2.3 That funding is allocated as identified in section 5 of this report to contribute to the refurbishment costs to bring the building into community use.
- 2.4 That delegated authority is given to the Head of Governance to execute any documents necessary to give effect to the above recommendations.

**SUMMARY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

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|---|---|--|
| <b>COMMUNITY IMPACT</b>                         | Do these proposals contribute to specific Priority Plan objective(s)?   |  |
|   | Yes   | Improved 'life chances' for all and People feeling safe and proud of where they live   |
|   | Will the proposals impact on specific groups of people?   |  |
|   | No  |  |
| <b>TARGET COMPLETION/DELIVERY DATE</b>          | External funding application submitted February 2012, programme of refurbishment to be developed following outcome of funding application |  |
| <b>FINANCIAL/VALUE FOR MONEY IMPACT</b>         | Yes   | The financial implications are detailed in paragraph 5 of this report. JAC 200112  |
| <b>LEGAL ISSUES</b>                             | Yes   | The Council has an obligation to obtain best consideration when disposing of any land and property (including granting leases of 7 years or more). This disposal by way of a lease will constitute a disposal at an undervalue which is permitted providing it is considered that the lease will help secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. Regard should be given to the Council's Community Strategy. |
| <b>OTHER IMPACTS, RISKS &amp; OPPORTUNITIES</b> | Yes   | The Project has the potential to have a positive impact for Residents in Dawley and the surrounding area by providing a venue for social, employment and training activities. Due to the location of the building,   |

|                                 |     |   |
|---------------------------------|-----|---|
|                                 |     | additional investment may be required to reduce the possible transfer of noise; this will be dependent on the agreed hours of use. The project will need to generate sufficient income to cover the future management and maintenance costs of the facility, the Dawley Town Hall Steering Group are currently finalising their business plan to ensure these costs can be met. |
| <b>IMPACT ON SPECIFIC WARDS</b> | Yes | Direct impact upon residents within Dawley Magna Ward, however the facility will be available for use for other groups and residents from other wards in the Borough.   |

## **PART B) – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **3. INFORMATION**

#### **3.1 Background**

- 3.1.1 Exploring the feasibility of returning Dawley Town Hall to community use was identified as an action within the Co-operative Council early adopter programme. Dawley Town Hall has been unoccupied since early 2010. Since then a few enquiries have been made by local community organisations and residents regarding the future of the building. A site plan for the building is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.2 The Community Engagement, Equalities and Action Team were asked to explore a range of models for returning Dawley Town Hall to community use. This process has involved carrying out consultation with residents, local organisations and partners on the future use of the building, along with options for the management of the facility. The consultation identified that 96% of those who completed the local survey felt that returning the Town Hall to community use would benefit the community.
- 3.1.3 A number of meetings have been held with local partners to explore the feasibility of opening the building as a community facility and a number of organisations including Capgemini, TCAT, Phoenix School, Great Dawley Parish Council and Dawley Regeneration Partnership have expressed an interest in becoming involved in the future of Dawley Town Hall and becoming part of a Community Trust that takes over responsibility for managing the building. Great Dawley Parish Council and Capgemini have each pledged £10,000 towards the delivery of the project.
- 3.1.4 Various models for returning the Town Hall to community use have been considered and the preferred option for local stakeholders is for the building to be leased to a partnership group that is external to the Council. It is felt that this model would enable the group to access a wider range of funding opportunities to refurbish the Town Hall and would provide a more sustainable future for the facility. Dawley Regeneration Partnership has agreed to act as the umbrella body with responsibility for overseeing the refurbishment and development of the facility and to support the development of a suitable community-led management organisation to manage the facility on an ongoing basis.
- 3.1.5 The steering group are considering cooperative approaches towards delivering the project, an example of this was a recent tidy up of the Town Hall that was carried out by volunteers from Capgemini and a local firm of solicitors. It is proposed that a cooperative approach is taken to both refurbishing the building and its ongoing management, this may include the use of employee and student volunteering, or projects that can develop the skills of young people, such as apprenticeship schemes.

#### **3.2 Feasibility**

- 3.2.1 Community consultation and follow up discussions have indicated that the building could be used for a variety of community activities including family and adult learning, toddler groups, dance classes and drama performances. The building could also be offered to the

community for hire for celebration and social events. The steering group are aiming to develop a unique facility that offers something unique in Dawley and complements other facilities in the Town. The development of the new Phoenix School adjacent to the site also offers the opportunity for there to be a close relationship between Dawley Town Hall and the Phoenix School.

- 3.2.2 The Dawley Town Hall Steering Group have carried out an initial feasibility study to identify the costs of refurbishment, running costs and potential income generation for the facility. The Steering Group is currently drawing up a more detailed business plan as the project will need to generate sufficient income to cover the management and maintenance costs of the building in the future. Consultation has identified the types of activities that people would like to see within the Town Hall, and identified a number of organisations that would be interested in hiring the building for their local group, or to run activities. The group have developed a 'draft programme' for the facility which has identified that sufficient income could be generated to cover the day to day running costs of the building. Partners on the steering group have pledged a contribution towards the management of the facility on an ongoing basis in terms of key holding and bookings.
- 3.2.3 The steering group has identified that there will need to be resources allocated to the development of the facility within the early stages of the project. It is proposed that a dedicated Project Manager is employed to initially carry out this role; a funding application is being prepared to cover the cost of this post. Once the project is fully operational it is envisaged that this cost would be met from the income generated from hiring out the facility.

### **3.3 Refurbishment**

- 3.3.1 A number of options for refurbishing the building have been drafted and offer a wide range between £150,000 and £420,000 dependent upon the specification and scale of the refurbishment. The lowest cost of £150,000 is for a basic refurbishment, maintenance and re-decoration of the building (including planning and associated fees). The £420,000 would fund a complete refurbishment including energy efficient investments such as a bio mass boiler which would make the building almost carbon neutral. This will significantly reduce the running costs for the building for the Trust and would strengthen the application to the Lottery. It is proposed to submit an application to the Lottery to contribute towards the costs of the refurbishment and other capital costs, such as the purchase of some equipment. The building is located within a residential area therefore dependent on hours of use additional investment in the building may be required to reduce noise. Through the Dawley Regeneration Partnership the project would be eligible to apply for a range of funding opportunities, including funding from the Big Lottery. The schedule of works for the refurbishment would depend on the amount of funding that can be accessed.
- 3.3.2 Through existing budgets the Council has identified a contribution of £120,000 that could contribute towards the refurbishment of the building, this funding will be used as match funding to support the Lottery bid. It is suggested that the Council manages this refurbishment process, as requested by the steering group, to avoid the need for a funding agreement to be prepared and executed.
- 3.3.3 The steering group have so far secured other funding totalling £28,000 including £10,000 from Great Dawley Parish Council and £10,000 from Capgemini. A funding application has been prepared that will be submitted to the Big Lottery to cover the remaining costs of the refurbishment, however if this application isn't successful the basic refurbishment would be carried out using the funding currently identified by the Council and other partners.

### **3.4 Future Management of The Town Hall**

- 3.4.1 It is proposed that the future management of Dawley Town Hall as a community facility is undertaken by Dawley Regeneration Partnership via the Dawley Town Hall Community Trust. The steering group are currently working towards establishing the trust, however, in the interim Dawley Regeneration Partnership, with the support of the partners on the steering group, will manage the project.

- 3.4.2 The management of Dawley Town Hall through a Community Trust offers a number of benefits. Telford & Wrekin Council does not have the resources to develop the Town Hall into a sustainable community facility. The development of a Community Trust will provide an opportunity for a wide range of partners and the community to become involved in running the Town Hall. The Trust will also be able to access a wider range of external funding opportunities for the refurbishment and ongoing development of the Town Hall.
- 3.4.3 It is proposed that a long-term lease be drawn up to allow Dawley Regeneration Partnership to take over the running of the Town Hall on behalf of the Community Trust until it is fully operational. Delegated authority is sought for the Head of Property & ICT to negotiate and agree the terms and conditions of the lease but it is anticipated that the lease period will be 25 years as it needs to be sufficiently lengthy to satisfy the requirements of the lottery funding who require that leases are for a minimum of 20 years in order for projects to be eligible for funding. If the funding bid to the Lottery is not successful the proposed length of the lease will be reviewed with the Regeneration Partnership. It is also proposed that any charges to the Regeneration Partnership for lease of the building be minimal based on a 'peppercorn' rent. However, Dawley Regeneration Partnership through the Community Trust would take on responsibility for all running costs including insurance, utilities and repairs.
- 3.4.4 Following community consultation it was identified that there is a need for a multi-use community facility within Dawley. Residents and local organisations would like to see a range of activities available at the Town Hall. It is envisaged that this will include the hiring out of the rooms within the building to local groups such as indoor bowls, youth groups, and music and theatre groups. Phoenix School would also like to use the Town Hall as an outreach facility in the community. Local people have expressed a keen interest in getting involved in the future development of the building, it is the intention of the Steering Group to develop a 'Friends of Dawley Town Hall' community group.

## **4 IMPACT ASSESSMENT ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **4.1 Financial Implications**

#### **Capital Implications.**

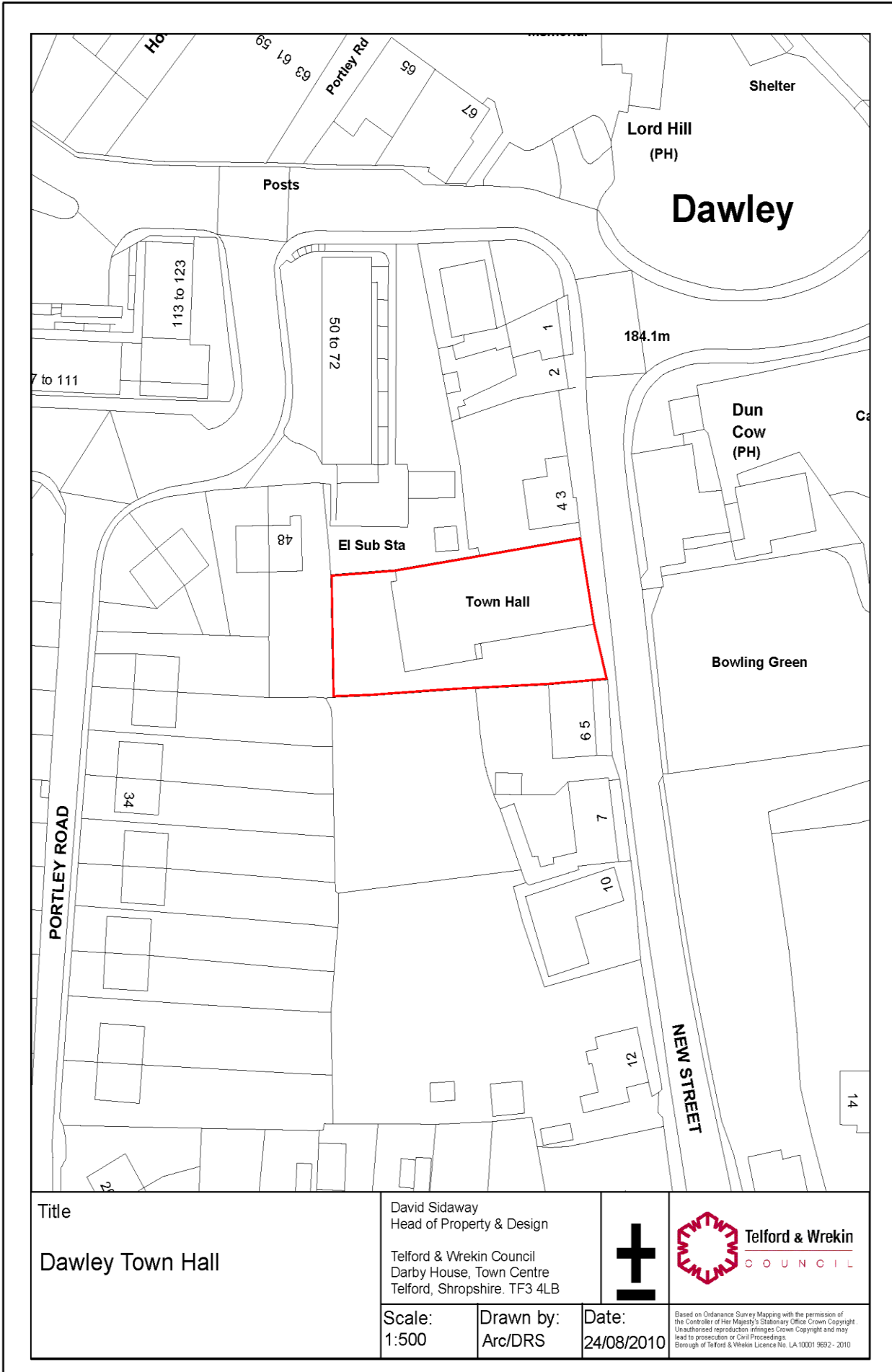
The extent of the refurbishment of Dawley Town Hall is dependent upon the level of funding that can be secured by the Dawley Regeneration Partnership. Estimates of the cost range between £150,000 and £420,000 (Paragraph 3.3.1), including planning, building regulations and associated fees. The Authority has allocated £120,000 from its existing capital programme towards the costs of refurbishment, £70,000 from the capital allocation from Dawley and £50,000 from the leisure capital programme. The balance of funding is to be secured by the Partnership.

**Revenue Implications.** No revenue funding will be made available by the Authority to the Partnership. Securing funding for the appointment of a dedicated Project Manager (Paragraph 3.2.3) and ongoing running and maintenance costs of the building will be the responsibility of the Partnership.

**Contribution in Kind – Income foregone.** The recommendation is that the Partnership is granted a 25 year lease at a peppercorn rent. The estimated market rent of the property (after basic refurbishment and redecoration) is £5,000 pa. The estimated rent assumes interest in the building at that level which in the short to medium term is very unlikely at these levels. So in essence the possibility of being able to let the building at a market rent in the foreseeable future is minimal. Holding the building in its current form is a revenue burden for the council in relation to costs associated with security, maintenance, National Non-Domestic Rates (NDR), utility cost and vandalism etc.

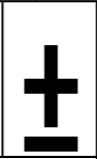
## **5 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None



Title  
**Dawley Town Hall**

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Scale:  
1:500

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