



Report to: Strategy, Performance & Finance Portfolio

Decision Date: 9 May 2024

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Paul Peacock

Director Lead: Deborah Johnson, Director of Customer Services & Org Development

Lead Officer: Mark Randle, Transformation & Improvement Officer

<b>Report Summary</b>	
<b>Type of Report</b>	Open Report – Non-key decision
<b>Report Title</b>	Proposed Improvements to National Civil War Centre and The Palace Theatre
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To set out to Portfolio Holder the proposed improvements to the office accommodation at the Civil War Centre (CWC) &amp; Palace Theatre</li> <li>• To set out to Portfolio Holder the proposed improvements to the ‘Green Room’ at the Palace Theatre</li> <li>• To set out to Portfolio Holder the proposed improvements to the H&amp;C Resource Centre at Brunel Drive</li> <li>• To obtain Portfolio Holder approval for the budget for these improvements</li> </ul>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approve the plans for the improvement to office space in the NCWC and The Palace Theatre</li> <li>• Approve the plans for the improvement to the ‘Green Room’ at The Palace Theatre</li> <li>• Agree the budget set out in 2.0 below</li> </ul>
<b>Alternative Options Considered</b>	Do not carry out the required works
<b>Reason for Recommendation</b>	To improve and bring the standard of the accommodation for staff working at The Palace Theatre and National Civil War Museum in line with staff working at Castle House.
<b>Decision Taken</b>	As per the recommendations.

## 1.0 Background

- 1.1 Until Spring 2016, the National Civil War Centre and Palace Theatre functioned as two separate buildings, each with its own offices and staff structure. The National Civil War Centre has an office on the first floor of the museum that housed seven desks and the Palace Theatre had offices on the first floor that housed five desks. There are also a small number of desks available at the Resource Centre at Brunel Drive, though these tend to be used only when staff are required to be at the Resource Centre for operational reasons.
- 1.2 In late 2015, work commenced to physically join the two buildings together, with the aim of merging operation into a single site. As a way of relocating during building work, as well as cementing the merging of the two previously separate teams, the Theatre team moved over to the National Civil War Centre offices, occupying a smaller office on the second floor of the museum.
- 1.3 In late 2017 structural issues to the Tudor Attic were identified (encompassing the office areas on the first and second floor). Subsequently all staff relocated to the Theatre office. To facilitate the extra desks needed, more working spaces were added to the Theatre office (to create eleven desks) using desks repurposed from the Museum offices.
- 1.4 Over the next few years, as the scope of Heritage and Culture grew (addition of the castle, expansion of service), increasing the number of staff in the offices, desk space has become an issue. This has been mitigated where possible, with desks being added to what used to function exclusively as a rest area for staff and volunteers to create a second office space. This is not a sustainable long-term solution, with staff no longer having access to a rest area (while there are still kitchen facilities and a table for lunches, many staff and volunteers have commented about feeling uncomfortable taking lunch in a room where other staff are working and talking about work). Post Covid, a hot desking policy has been in place to tackle there not being enough desks to meet the needs of staff working in the building. Working from home, or hot desking at Castle House is encouraged where possible, though much of Heritage and Culture's work is operational (Duty Management, facilitating school visits etc) so this is not always a viable alternative.
- 1.5 The current office set up is not functioning as efficiently as it could. Many of the desks are large and heavy, so arranging the office in a way to save as much space as possible is difficult. While IT have been supportive in trying to ensure equipment is up to date, the network infrastructure of the office struggles to accommodate the substantial number of workstations in a room not designed for that capacity. A lack of storage facilities makes hot desking difficult, with no designated place for staff to store belongings on site, or storage for office resources (paper, stationary etc). This often leads to the office building up mess quickly. The general décor is outdated, and it is not a pleasant workspace.
- 1.6 In 2023, funding and a way forward was agreed to repair the structural issues to the Tudor Attic. When this work is complete, the office space will be habitable again. There is an opportunity to restore eight desks to the Museum side office, reduce the number of desks in the main Theatre office to eight, remove any workstations from the staff and volunteer room and add storage to facilitate proper hot desking. This work would

increase the number of desks available, whilst improving the work environment, as well as restoring proper rest facilities to the building.

- 1.7 The current Wi-Fi bandwidth is sufficient for the needs of the staff, with the refurb office work being undertaken and network point installation this should alleviate any immediate concerns. The network replacement project scheduled in May and completion in June will improve the Wi-Fi capabilities.
- 1.8 If in the future there are any additional staff, systems or physical offices, this will require further investigation and potential survey to understand the needs and locations of any additional infrastructure. If any additional Wi-Fi access points are required in the new offices, additional budget for the equipment and a Wi-Fi survey may be required.
- 1.9 In terms of rest facilities, we would also like to ensure that this refresh extends to the backstage team. Currently the 'Green Room' where the team rest during shows and while setting up the stage (the team need to be close to the stage, so cannot use the general office spaces) are outdated, without any ergonomic rest spaces, with staff sitting on wooden benches. Adding comfortable seating would bring their facilities closer in line with what has been provided to the rest of the council employees.
- 1.10 A plan of the new proposed set up of the Theatre Offices and the National Civil War Offices, is shown in **Appendix A**.
- 1.11 The Heritage & Culture Resources Centre is based at the Environment Services site at Brunel Drive, it acts as the museum store, containing historical artifacts that are not currently on display. There is an office and a research room, the research room is an integral part of the Nationally Accredited Museum Service. The room is a significant element of the requirement to provide research facilities to enquirers and academics.
- 1.12 The desks, chairs and IT equipment require updating and the building does not have Wi-Fi connectivity. This impacts on the welfare and ability to work effectively at the site. Researchers frequently request access to Wi-Fi when in the researcher's room to extend their research while in situ. They may for instance need to go online to examine a particular element of an object in detail. As it stands this is dependent on their own data and internet signal. They may also need to meet with other researchers in other parts of the country e.g., Universities, we currently would not be able to facilitate this.

## 2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder endorse the repairs/upgrades to The Palace Theatre and National Civil War Centre detailed below.

### 2.1 Palace Theatre office & volunteer room

Area of works	Outline of works required	Illustrations	Cost (£)
Decoration	Decorate Theatre office and volunteer room	<b>Appendix B Photo's 1, 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5</b>	1,568
Replace and fit carpet	Remove and fit new carpet in the Theatre office and volunteer room	<b>Appendix B</b>	1,399

		<b>Photo's 1, 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5</b>	
Network/Electrical points	Upgrade ICT/Network points in Theatre office		2,643
Desks	Purchase 8 new desks for Theatre office (8x £238)		1,904
<i>Chairs</i>	<i>They had already purchased 8 new chairs.</i>		
Comfortable chairs	Purchase 3 comfortable chairs for volunteer room (3 x £138)		414
Dining Table's	Purchase 3 dining table's for volunteer room (3 x £198)		594
Dining chairs	Purchase 12 dining chairs for volunteer room (12 x £119)		1,428
Lockers	Purchase lockers for volunteer room (14 x 3, 42 lockers, 45cm depth) (14 x £239)		3,346
Blinds	Purchase and fit blinds in both rooms, 3 windows in Theatre office and 1 window in the volunteer room.		650
Cabinet	Purchase cabinet for storage (e.g., stationary) for Theatre office		345
<b>Total</b>			<b>13,648</b>

## 2.2 Palace Theatre Green Room

<b>Area of works</b>	<b>Outline of works required</b>	<b>Illustrations</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
Remove all existing items and prep	Remove kitchen and seating from the Green Room and make room good for re-fitting	<b>Appendix B Photo's 6, 7 &amp; 8</b>	4,000
Kitchen	Fit new kitchen worktops, cupboards and refrigerator in Green Room		1,300
Decoration	Decorate Green Room		1,500
Flooring	Fit new flooring in Green Room		941
Purchase seating	Purchase and fit new comfortable seating for Green Room		3,295
Purchase coffee table	Purchase new coffee table for Green Room		189
Lockers	Purchase new lockers (3 x 2, 6 lockers) (3 x £210) for Green Room		630
<b>Total</b>			<b>11,855</b>

## 2.3 The National Civil War Centre main office

<b>Area of works</b>	<b>Outline of works required</b>	<b>Illustrations</b>	<b>Cost (£)</b>
Desks	Purchase 8 new desks for NCWC main office (8x £238)		1,904

Chairs	Purchase 5 new chairs for NCWC main office (5x £109) <i>NCWC already have 3</i>		545
Docking Stations	Purchase 5 new docking stations for NCWC main office (5x £150) <i>NCWC already have 3</i>		750
Monitor Screens	Purchase 10 new Monitor Screens (5 x pairs) for NCWC main office (10x £110) <i>NCWC already have 3 pairs</i>		5,500
Photocopier	Rented desktop size photocopier through Ricoh contract (£49 per quarter) for NCWC main office		
Hot water	Fit hot water dispenser for hot drinks in small kitchen, this will be rented and serviced through Business Manager		
Fridge	Purchase tabletop refrigerator for NCWC main office		120
Cabinet	Purchase cabinet for storage (e.g., stationary) for NCWC main office		345
<b>Total</b>			<b>9,164</b>

#### 2.4 The National Civil War Centre meeting room

Area of works	Outline of works required	Illustrations	Cost (£)
Meeting Table and chairs	Meeting table and chairs for 8 people being sourced from Farrar Close for NCWC meeting room		
Hybrid meeting equipment	Free standing screen and hybrid meeting equipment and set up. ICT have equipment sourced and put aside for NCWC meeting room		
Blinds	Purchase and fit blinds in 1 window in the for NCWC meeting room		150
<b>Total</b>			<b>150</b>

#### 2.5 The National Civil War Centre - hot desk room

Area of works	Outline of works required	Illustrations	Cost (£)
Desks	Purchase 3 new desks for NCWC hot desk room (3 x £238)		714
Chairs	Purchase 3 new chairs for NCWC hot desk room (3 x £109)		327
Docking Stations	Purchase 3 new docking stations for NCWC hot desk room (3 x £150)		450

Monitor Screens	Purchase 6 new Monitor Screens (3 x pairs) for NCWC hot desk room (6 x £110)		660
Blinds	Purchase and fit blinds in 1 window in the NCWC hot desk room		150
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,301</b>

## 2.6 Heritage & Culture Resource Centre - main office

Area of works	Outline of works required	Illustrations	Cost (£)
Desks	Purchase 3 new desks for Resource Centre main office (3x £238)		714
Chairs	Purchase 3 new chairs for Resource Centre main office (3x £109)		
Docking Stations	Purchase 2 new docking stations for Resource Centre main office (2 x £150) <i>They already possess 1 stand-alone PC</i>		300
Monitor Screens	Purchase 6 new Monitor Screens (3 x pairs) for Resource Centre main office (6x £110)		660
Wi-Fi	Install Wi-Fi router to office to enable Wi-Fi (provided by ICT)		
<b>Total</b>			<b>2,001</b>

## 2.7 Heritage & Culture Resource Centre – research room

Area of works	Outline of works required	Illustrations	Cost (£)
Desks	Purchase 3 new desks for Resource Centre research room (3 x £238)		714
Chairs	Purchase 3 new chairs for Resource Centre research room (3 x £109)		327
Stand-alone PCs	Provide 3 stand-alone PCs from IT storage for Resource Centre research room		
Monitor Screens	Purchase 6 new Monitor Screens (3 x pairs) for Resource Centre research room (6 x £110)		660
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,701</b>

**Total Cost    £40,820**

## 3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations, officers have considered the following implications:

Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment below where appropriate.

### **3.1 Financial Implications (FIN23-24/6605)**

3.1.1 The total cost of the proposed project is £40,820 as above. As none of the works are classified as capital in nature, this will be funded through the Revenue account.

3.1.2 There is currently sufficient funds within the Change Management Reserve in order to be able to accommodate the £40,820 as set out above.

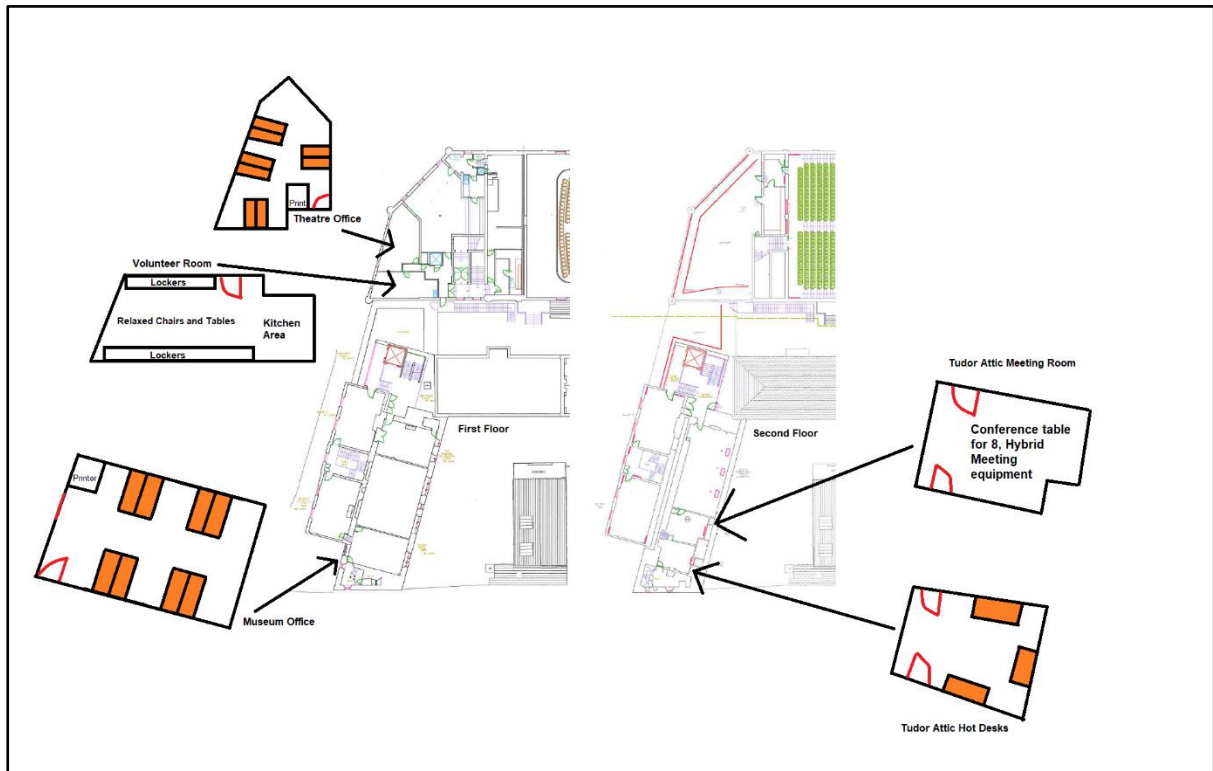
### **Background Papers and Published Documents**

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

None

# Appendix A

## Plan of National Civil War Centre and The Palace Theatre



**Appendix B**

**Theatre Office**

**1**



**2**



**3**



**Theatre**

**Volunteer Room**

**4**



**5**



**Palace Theatre Green room**

**6**



**7**



**8**

