

which currently stand at:

- Blackburn Town Hall (excluding second floor meeting space) – 59% occupied
- Darwen Town Hall (excluding meeting space) – 60% occupied
- Tower Block – 57% occupied
- Duke Street – 92% occupied

There is scope for rationalisation to reduce costs and improve services.

The refurbishment of 10 Duke Street has already demonstrated how a building can be modernised to maximise space utilisation, reduce occupancy costs and improve services and productivity. The move to Duke Street allowed the Council to vacate three leased buildings; the Exchange, the Innovation Centre and the Beehive.

Detailed condition and structural surveys have been carried out on Blackburn Town Hall and the Tower Block.

Both buildings are deemed to be structurally sound and recent stonework, window and roof restoration have rendered Blackburn Town Hall externally watertight. However, both require internal investment to bring them up to current standards and maximise available floorspace. Darwen Town Hall has not yet been surveyed.

The data identifies that not all buildings are required.

The review will take account of the availability of office accommodation at the Bungalow at Davyfield Road depot. The Bungalow is currently being refurbished and it will provide out-of-town accommodation for up to 120 staff from appropriate teams and touch down space for staff who need to access a Council building without having to travel back into the town centre during peak times. The object is to ensure the building can provide for future agile working practices. The Bungalow's location on the edge of town ensures that the building can provide emergency/civil contingency resilience in the event of a town centre building network failure.

The proposal is to undertake a piece of work that will look critically at both the potential for, and cost of, internal modifications at the Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls to increase capacity and modernise the office accommodation.

Subject to the surveys, a report on the Tower Block will then be brought at a later date.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

There is an over-supply of Council accommodation for Town Hall staff. Modernisation of existing property, in particular the Blackburn and Darwen Town Halls, would increase capacity, improve service provision and reduce operational costs. Further surveys are required to establish what internal changes can be made to achieve these objectives and the cost of doing so. The risk of not taking action at this juncture is to continue to carry the considerable additional costs of empty accommodation.

Further consideration will be given to the long term future of the Tower Block, should it be deemed surplus to requirements, and reports will be provided on this to the Executive Board. If deemed surplus, future discussions with the Mall will be required on this matter.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Council's established Property & Procurement Policies will be followed. The Council's existing Agile Working Toolkit will be supported and the Council's Digital Strategy.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Costs will be ascertained to undertake the detailed feasibility and concept reports. The costs of funding these costs will be met from the earmarked Office Accommodation and Property Improvements revenue reserve.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The procurement of the detailed survey feasibility costings will comply with the Council's Contract & Procurement Procedure Rules & Public Contracts Regulations.
The Council owns the Freehold title for both the Old Town Hall and Darwen Town Hall.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The project will be managed by the Council's Property Team, with the Council's partner Capita providing technical support.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

No consultations are required at this stage.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION: 1

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DATE:	27 th September 2017
BACKGROUND PAPER:	