

COUNCIL
02 July 2020

Report of the Director of Regulatory Services

MATLOCK TOWN HALL – BUILDING ADAPTATIONS RELATING TO COVID 19

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To outline a number of proposed adaptations to the Town Hall building to allow safe use by staff and the public in line with Government guidance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the work already undertaken and approve the proposed building adaptation works is noted.
2. That additional revenue expenditure of £40,000 is approved for the adaptation works.

WARDS AFFECTED

All.

STRATEGIC LINK

The 'Place' priority in the District Council's Corporate Plan highlights: *Keeping the Derbyshire Dales Clean, Green and Safe*. The proposals in this report seek to ensure that the Town Hall is configured in a way that keeps the public and staff as safe as possible from COVID-19 risks.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 On 23rd March this year, the United Kingdom was placed into lockdown by the Government to lessen the spread of COVID-19. In addition, social distancing measures were introduced to help slow the spread of infection.
- 1.2 In order to support these measures, the Town Hall reception was closed to public visitors on 24th March 2020 and the majority of Town Hall based staff commenced working from home in accordance with Government guidance.
- 1.3 Throughout the main lockdown period, a core of key staff, mainly in the Business Support Unit supported by a member of Corporate Leadership Team, continued to work from the Town Hall to keep the switchboard running and to

support other staff working from home. Throughout this period, a maximum of 15 staff were present in the building.

- 1.4 Under normal circumstances, the Town Hall accommodates approximately 160 staff and tenants and public access is available to reception during normal opening hours.
- 1.5 On 10th May 2020 the Government announced the easing of lockdown which relaxed some of the restrictions but still contained the advice to work from home where possible. As a result, the Town Hall continues to operate with reduced staff numbers with some staff calling in to collect files etc. with a typical building occupancy of 15 – 20.
- 1.6 The current guidance issued by Government regarding the safe use of offices is included here <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/offices-and-contact-centres> which contains the following specific recommendations:-

Staggering arrival and departure times at work to reduce crowding into and out of the workplace, taking account of the impact on those with protected characteristics.

Reducing congestion, for example, by having more entry points to the workplace.

Using markings and introducing one-way flow at entry and exit points.

Providing handwashing facilities, or hand sanitiser where not possible, at entry and exit points and not using touch-based security devices such as keypads.

Maintaining use of security access devices, such as keypads or passes, and adjusting processes at entry/exit points to reduce risk of transmission. For example, cleaning pass readers regularly and asking staff to hold their passes next to pass readers rather than touching them.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 Following the Government's announcement regarding the phased reopening of non-essential retail/services throughout June and July, a risk assessment of the Town Hall has been undertaken which considers the risks to staff and tenants in normal operation and the additional risks introduced should the Town Hall be re-opened to the public. The risk assessment is attached at Appendix1 of this report.

2.2 The risk assessment identifies a number of areas for attention/adaptation in order to comply with the current Government guidance and these can be summarised as below

Entrance/Exit points	In normal operation all staff enter the building via main reception. Under the proposals below an additional 2 entry points would be provided.
Circulation within building	In order to maintain social distancing of 2m, a one way system would be required in main corridors. Even if social distancing is reduced to 1m this should still be considered as the Town Hall corridor width is 1.45m. A queuing system will be required to ensure safe public access to reception.
Screens in public areas	In order to reduce the risks presented by COVID 19, screens will be needed in reception and Interview rooms/booths.
Security doors	Existing system relies on a large number of mechanical keypad locks. It is proposed to replace this with 4 powered automatic doors operated by security fobs. This would make the non –public areas of the building secure and would negate the need for further security locks.
Fire doors	On the basis of the adaptation of the above, all other corridor doors in the building could be fitted with electronic hold open devices which would close should the fire alarm sound.

In order to mitigate against these risks to staff and visitors, the following points are noted for the Council's' consideration:

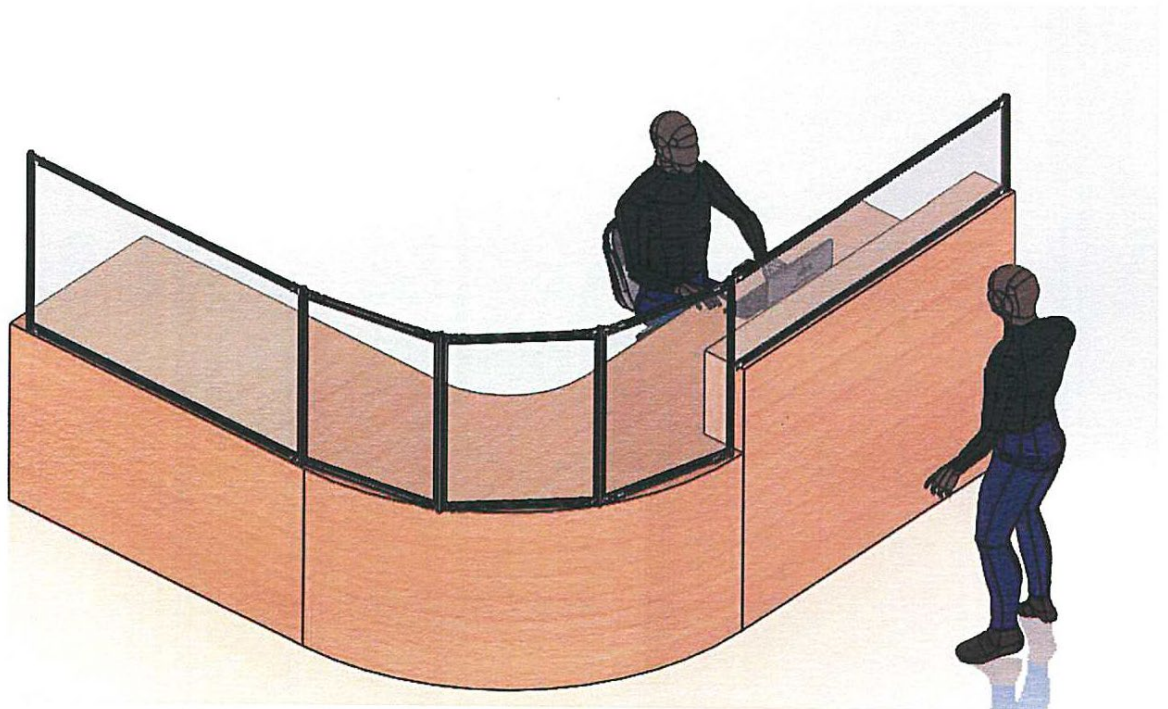
2.3 A number of adaptations have already taken place or have been ordered to avoid delays due to significant demand. A summary of the current position and the associated costs is given below:-

Entrance/Exit points	2 new entry points to the building included in security locks quotation below.
Circulation within building	Socially distancing carpet tiles ordered and new heavy duty carpet tiles installed in reception. Total cost £2,000 .
Screens/Queuing system in public areas	Appropriate aluminium framed screens have been ordered and are due to be installed in reception, interview booths and interview rooms later this month. Queuing barriers to be ordered. Total cost £5,000 .
Security doors	Installation of new powered security doors at 2 entry points and 2 internal doors from reception including associated building alterations and electrical works. Total cost £30,000
Fire doors	Installation of Doorguard hold open devices on all remaining fire doors. Total cost £3,000

- 2.4 In addition to our own staff, the Town Hall building is occupied with a number of partner organisations and tenants including Arvato, Citizens Advice Bureau, Rural Action Derbyshire, Adullam Housing, Age UK and the BBC. Our risk assessments and proposals for the building have been shared with these organisations.
- 2.5 The proposed works are designed to make the Town Hall building compliant with Government regulations in respect of COVID 19 but the main elements of the works relating to improvements to reception, new staff entrance points, new security doors and door hold open devices will result in an improved environment for staff and customers going forward.
- 2.6 The proposed changes to access/door arrangements will improve the circulation within the building such that, when the decision to open to the public is made, customers will have access to a safe and welcoming reception area and staff and tenants will have their own private entrances to the building rather than all access being via reception as at present.
- 2.7 The 2 new external access doors will give direct access to the Level 2/4/6 and 3/5/7 blocks for staff and tenants with 2 further doors linking reception to the private areas of the building. These doors will open automatically and will be fitted with electronic locks operable by security fobs. This will improve the security of the Town Hall and allow the removal of approximately 15 mechanical keypad locks throughout the building. These doors and the remaining corridor fire doors throughout the building will be fitted with Door guard hold-open devices linked to the fire alarm. The result of this is that staff will be able to freely circulate within the private areas of the building without constantly having to open doors.
- 2.8 The proposed improvements to circulation in the building include changes to floor finishes including replacement of the worn out carpet in main reception with a heavy duty carpet tiled finish. The carpet finish in main circulation areas in the building enables the temporary installation of “sign” carpet tiles and direction markings to inform social distancing. An example of how this may look in reception and building corridors is indicated below.



- 2.9 The proposed security screens are of aluminium framed Perspex construction to complement the existing surface finishes in reception. They contain a slot underneath to allow papers to be passed through and will have an appropriate cut out to allow operation of the card payment machine on reception. An example of how the installation may look is indicated below.



- 2.10 Of our tenants, the Citizens Advice Bureau has the largest number of external customers and have their own interview rooms situated off main reception. They are currently working with us to install matching screens in their areas of the building.
- 2.11 In addition to the works outlined above there will be various enabling minor building works including a minor configuration of the reception counter and the purchase of a barrier queuing system for use in reception.
- 2.12 The total cost of the works as outlined above is £40,000 and the suggested budgetary provision for this is included in the Financial Risk paragraph of this report.

3. RISK ASSESSMENT

3.1 Legal

The proposed works comply with Government advice and guidelines to protect the health and safety of employees and visitors alike. The goods and works required were procured in accordance with the Councils Contract Standing Orders. The legal risk is therefore low.

3.2 Financial

There is no provision in the 2020/21 revenue budget for the estimated additional expenditure of £40,000 associated with these adaptations. However, the Council has received a government grant of £744,150 to assist the Council in meeting the additional costs and lost income arising from the coronavirus pandemic. The additional expenditure arising from this recommendation could be financed by using part of the government grant or, if the grant is insufficient to meet all additional expenses and lost income, it would be financed from the General Reserve. The financial risk to the Council is assessed as medium.

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

In preparing this report, the relevance of the following factors has also been considered: prevention of crime and disorder; equalities; environmental; climate change; health; human rights; personnel and property.

5. CONTACT INFORMATION

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6 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

7 ATTACHMENTS

Appendix One - Risk Assessment