

**REPORT TO EXECUTIVE**

DATE	27 <sup>th</sup> MAY 2008
PORTFOLIO	RESOURCES
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**Office Accommodation – Parker Lane Offices****PURPOSE**

1. To seek approval to amend a previous decision about accommodation works at the Parker Lane Offices.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the scheme approved by the Executive in April 2007 does not proceed.
3. That the Head of Property Consultancy continues to investigate options to address outstanding accommodation issues in line with the Council's Accommodation Utilisation Policy and Asset Management Strategy.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

4. That there is not sufficient budget available to finance a scheme that provides satisfactory accommodation for the staff concerned. To proceed with the scheme would not represent value for money for the Council.

**SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

5. The Executive, at its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2007, agreed to proceed with works to the Parker Lane Offices at a budget of £248,900. The objectives were twofold namely:
  1. To bring the staff of the Planning & Environmental Health Unit together into one building. At the time there were staff located in three premises, Parker Lane, Nicholas Street, and Padiham Town Hall.
  2. To bring back into use the former banking hall which is currently not used following the opening of the Contact Centre.

6. Following the decision of the Executive, detailed design works were undertaken and a bill of quantities was drawn up. It was also necessary to develop a detailed project plan so that the works could be scheduled with minimum disruption for the staff in the building. This applied not only to staff of the Planning & Environmental Health Unit but also for the Revenues & Benefits and Housing Units.
7. As a separate piece of work, the Council has been carrying out building alterations to Padiham Town Hall. In order for the work to proceed it was necessary for Council staff to vacate the building in October 2007. This was achieved by moving the staff into existing available accommodation in Parker Lane on a temporary basis.
8. The detailed bill of quantities for the Parker Lane scheme were completed in January 2008 and a more accurate estimate of cost prepared. This was calculated at a figure in excess of £400,000 which was far higher than the available budget. The scheme could not be contemplated at that figure and staff in Property Consultancy began to investigate the possibility of bringing down the cost by reducing the specification.
9. The outcome of this exercise was that although it was possible to reduce the cost of the project significantly, this could only be achieved by compromising user requirements, and introducing significant levels of operational inefficiencies. Such a scheme would not offer value for money for the Council and could not, in the view of officers be proceeded with. Members are invited to endorse this decision formally.
10. The temporary moves that took place last year have meant that Planning & Environmental Health staff are now located on two sites rather than three. This has improved operational and managerial issues to a degree but it would not be acceptable to regard them as a permanent solution. It will therefore be necessary to examine other possible solutions to current accommodation problems at a more acceptable cost for the Council.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION**

11. There is an allocation of £258,900 for Office Accommodation in the Capital Programme for 2008/09. There are no other commitments against this budget.

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

12. Any proposed scheme should be consistent with the Council's Accommodation Utilisation Study and Asset Management Strategy.

#### **DETAILS OF CONSULTATION**

#### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14. Office Accommodation file

#### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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