

INVITATION TO SUBMIT EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST FOR ALTERNATIVE USES OF BEESTON TOWN HALL

Introduction

As part of its on-going drive to improve efficiency and economy in the delivery of all its services, Broxtowe Borough Council is considering the future of Beeston town hall as most of the services there are now being re-located to more suitable buildings.

In December 2017, the public was invited to share its views on future use of the Town Hall, including the possibility of disposal and/or redevelopment of the site. This generated a large response from which it is clear that the building enjoys the affection of many local residents, most of whom would prefer re-purposing to redevelopment. A wide range of potential community and allied uses were suggested by consultees and the Council has therefore decided to give interested parties more time to work up detailed proposals for alternative uses before taking any further action towards disposing of the Town Hall.

This pack has therefore been compiled as a guide for any group – or collection of groups – wishing to express formal interest in using the Town Hall. The Council will compile a shortlist of the most attractive proposals by the end of April, following which a more comprehensive and final offer will be requested to include evidence of financial sustainability and a full business case. It is intended that the future of the Town Hall will be confirmed at a full meeting of the Council in early autumn.

Policy Context

The Council's policy on the Disposal of Land & Property will apply to any use, letting or disposal of the Town Hall. A copy of the full policy document will be found on the Council's website.

Property Details

Plans

A set of floor plans is included in this pack.

A site plan is also included. Please note that Devonshire Avenue car park is to be retained for use by Council employees who need to use their vehicles as part of their daily jobs and will not therefore be available for Town Hall users during weekday office hours. This car park may be available outside of these times under a separate licence agreement, depending on demand for general town centre parking to support other new initiatives such as the proposed cinema development on the former bus station site.

Costs & values

The Council is open-minded as to whether a freehold sale or leasing solution will be favoured. In either scenario, it is important that proposers understand the financial implications of taking on the Town Hall. Their ability to afford these will be tested in respect of shortlisted proposals.

Based on actual figures for 2016/17 (and 2017/18 where already known), the annual running costs (revenue) are estimated at £100,000. These include such items as routine maintenance & repair, utilities, insurance, cleaning, security and rates.

Further, purchasers or tenants will be required to assume responsibility for periodic capital repairs – these can be considerable in an historic building. Shortlisted proposers will be encouraged to undertake their own assessment of these repairs but should be aware that significant investment in replacing / upgrading heating systems, bringing the lift up to modern accessibility standards and window replacement will be required over the next few years. (These underlying liabilities are one reason why the Council is relocating its services to more efficient and economic buildings.)

In addition to these running costs, proposals that anticipate the grant of a lease will need to make due allowance for payment of rent as the Council is required to achieve “best consideration” when disposing of an asset. As a guide, the open market rental value in existing use and condition has been estimated at around £50,000 per annum.

For an outright purchase, the Council would expect to receive in excess of £500,000 for an unencumbered freehold sale. This is based on independent valuation advice.

Finally, any conversion or alteration works required to suit the proposed new uses will need to be fully funded by the occupier(s) / owner(s).

NOTE: In exceptional circumstances, the Council may be prepared to consider financial support for compelling proposals that confer substantial community benefit and/or assist directly with delivery of core Council strategic objectives. This support may be in the form of reduced rent, grants towards capital works or other appropriate initiatives.

Planning

The current permitted use for the Town Hall is as office accommodation.

Any proposals involving a change of use will require consent from the Local Planning Authority. This is also Broxtowe Borough Council, but applicants should note that planning is a statutory function separate to any property ownership. Any necessary applications will be treated the same as if they were made by a third party – the Council cannot simply give itself consent without following the normal procedure.

The cost of planning and any other necessary consents will be the responsibility of the applicant.

General enquiries may be made of the planning department, but interested parties will not be required to submit a formal application as part of their response to this invitation.

A recent third party application to list the building was rejected by Historic England. Notwithstanding, the Council will give favourable consideration to proposals that retain valued features of the building. These are: The front elevation, stained glass panel on the half-landing (which could be relocated) and potentially the staircase.

The Council will similarly favour proposals that include retention of the Town Hall in substantially its existing form. Demolition and redevelopment is the least favoured option and will only be entertained if no suitable alternatives emerge from the subject process.

Open day

Appointments can be made to view the Town Hall on Friday 16th March between 0900 and 1100; 1500 and 1630. Please email john.delaney@broxtowe.gov.uk with your preferred time and number of visitors. Depending on the response, the number of visitors representing each interested party may have to be restricted.

The property may also be viewed without prior appointment on the same day between 1130 and 1430. For safety reasons, it will be necessary to limit the number of people within the building at any one time, so please be prepared to wait at busy times.

Guidance for compiling an Expression of Interest

There has been a strong response to the public consultation from organisations and individuals interested in using the Town Hall for a variety of purposes. It is therefore important that you give us as much detail as possible about your organisation, the work you do and how you plan to use the Town Hall so that your interest can be fully considered. We also need to make sure that proposals are realistic and achievable – taking on such an asset is a serious undertaking with considerable financial obligations.

The Council hopes to receive a mix of Expressions of Interest from both community and commercial organisations who may be able to secure the Town Hall's future. This will assist it in complying with its obligations to obtain best value when realising any of its assets. This does not mean that it will necessarily accept the highest financial offer, so it is important that any community or allied benefits associated with proposals are clearly explained at this early stage.

It is unlikely that the Council will retain any residual presence in the Town Hall in the medium- to long-term. It will therefore favour proposals that address how the entire building will be used and managed. If your plans only require a part of the building and/or occasional use, you are encouraged to develop a joint solution with other like-minded organisations.

Your response should therefore address the following:

A: About you / the organisation you represent

NB: Proposals made on behalf of one or more organisations are welcome, but you will need to fully explain the working arrangements between partners and identify which organisation will take the lead role.

1. Type of organisation (partnership / company / charity / etc.)
2. Official registered address
3. Communication address (if different) and main contact details.
4. Description of primary activities
5. Geographical area of operation

B: Financial

1. Detailed financial information is not required at this initial stage. However, a summary of how proposals will be funded should be provided. Please specifically identify any anticipated requirements for external grants, loans, disposal of existing assets, etc.
2. **For leasing proposals:**
 - a. Initial rent offered (Subject to Contract)
 - b. Length of initial term
 - c. Any special lease provisions requested (e.g. break clauses, limits of repair & maintenance liability, etc.)
3. **For proposals to acquire the freehold:**
 - a. Purchase price offered (Subject to Contract)
 - b. Any special conditions

C: Proposed use

1. Proposed building use (e.g.: offices, art gallery, restaurant, etc.)
2. With this require planning consent? If yes, explain how the proposed use will address relevant planning policies.
3. Brief description of any major changes required to the Town Hall to facilitate the proposed use(s). A simple plan may help to demonstrate this, but detailed working drawings are not required at this stage.
4. Please highlight any arrangements to maintain public access to the building.
5. Are you hoping to purchase the building or take a lease with full repairing obligations?

D: Business case

Shortlisted proposers will only need to provide a detailed business plan as part of their second stage application. There is no specific requirement for how this plan is structured, but it should normally contain the following information as a minimum:

- a) Description of the proposal
- b) Demand and competition analysis
- c) Marketing plan
- d) Resources plan
- e) Management plan
- f) Cash flow forecast (income & expenditure) for the first 5 years of operation
- g) Details of capital investment required and sources of funding
- h) Executive summary

At this initial stage, it may be useful to consider this as part of your planning process, and inclusion of an executive summary would help give your application credibility. Failure to do so will not necessarily result in failure to be shortlisted.

E: Community benefit

1. Please explain how your proposal will provide social and/or economic and/or environmental benefits to the local community.
2. Please explain how your proposal will encourage diversity and work to improve community cohesion and reduce inequalities.
3. Please explain how your proposal will contribute to the Council's own priorities and strategic objectives.

F: Conflicts of interest

Any personal relationships between proposers, their immediate families and/or business associates with Officers or Members of Broxtowe Borough Council must be declared within your Expression of Interest. Whilst the existence of relationship will not automatically result in proposals being dismissed, failure to declare such will.

Submission details

Expressions of Interest should be limited to 4 sides of A4 paper at a minimum of 12 point font. In addition to this, up to 4 additional A4 sides may be included to allow for plans, organisation charts, tables or numerical information.

These should be sent to: **John Delaney, Head of Property Services, Broxtowe Borough Council**

Either by e-mail to: john.delaney@broxtowe.gov.uk

Or post / delivery in person to: **Town Hall, Foster Avenue, Beeston, Notts. NG9 1AB**

To arrive not later than 12:00 noon on Tuesday 3rd April 2018

Evaluation Criteria

Responses to this call for proposals will be evaluated on their own merits and within the context of the Council's Disposal of Land & Property Policy, as referenced above.

Address for Queries

Any queries regarding this information pack and/or details required within your Expression of Interest should be addressed to **John Delaney, Head of Property Services, Broxtowe Borough Council** as per the contact details above.

Privacy Policy

The expression of interest you submit will be retained for up to 6 years in electronic and/or hard format for the sole purpose of assessing your interest in the town hall. Whilst commercial confidentiality will be maintained wherever possible and appropriate, your submission, or a redacted version thereof, may be subject to release under Freedom of Information.

Please also confirm in your submission that you are happy for it to be passed on in whole or in part to the Council's external professional advisors for the sole purpose of assisting the Council in assessing your submission of interest.