

Report to Stronger Place Select Committee

Date of meeting: 23rd September 2021



Portfolio: Customer and Partnerships

Subject: Branding of the Ground Floor of the Civic Offices

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Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- 1 To review the content of the report and to provide recommendations for Cabinet consideration at its meeting on 11th October 2021 particularly:**
 - a) The exercise of re-branding the Ground Floor of the Civic Offices to reflect its new community and collaborative purpose;**
 - b) The proposed designs contained in Appendices A and B of this report;**
 - c) The proposed names of the Ground Floor destination as ‘The Civic’ or ‘The Civic Hub’.**

Report:

1. Initially, it is important to stress that this report is not proposing a re-naming of the Civic Offices. Instead, this report asks Members to consider the re-branding of the Civic Offices Ground Floor to promote the area as a new destination where EFDC services work collaboratively with partners to provide wraparound solutions for residents and wider community activity.

2. The refurbishment of the Civic Offices provided the Council with an opportunity to review how the building was used. The new building now sees a much-reduced footprint for purely Epping Forest District Council staff on the second floor with the top floor being occupied as a commercial let. The Conder building will be demolished to make way for new housing. The Ground Floor of the refurbished building now operates as a hub for Council front-line services operating with a wide range of partners to provide joined-up solutions for the Community with the aim of providing added value and improved outcomes for those who visit the new facility.

3. This is a real step-change for how the Council works with partners and uses the asset that is the Civic Offices to provide services to the community. The Ground Floor comprises a general Welcome Area for the whole building, including for those visiting commercial tenants and is resourced by EFDC staff from Customer Services supported by the Concierge Service. Around the Welcome Area is a general customer lounge for waiting and more informal conversations, private interview rooms, self-serve customer terminals and the Community Hub room. The flow of the Ground Floor takes you from the Welcome Area to the Conference Suite. This area whilst available for EFDC activity is also a facility which can be hired by partners to use and wider community activity. Leading on from the Conference Suite is the café area and potential location of the Epping library. There is common activity that the library

engages in that closely relates to the services provided by the other partners on the Ground Floor, notably well-being and digital inclusion. Again the Conference Suite is available to support any joint activity for events or other activity. The purpose of taking Members through the Ground Floor locations shows the integrated activity of the Ground Floor and clear signage and direction is needed for the visitor journey through this space. Signs currently exist in a temporary format but a more suitable solution is needed to improve the visitor experience.

4. The close proximity and integration of the Ground Floor and activity within it lends itself to one common branding. Initially a separate brand was to be developed for the Community Hub itself but given the flow and connectivity between the areas it has been concluded that a single branding incorporating signage be used for the Ground Floor. The branding needs to reflect that it is not a single organisation-based area but instead demonstrates the collaborative nature of the activity – one customer visiting multiple services in one space.

5. Work has been taking place over the summer developing what the branding could look like. Two options have come forward for what the Ground Floor can be termed as 'The Civic' or 'The Civic Hub'. Again, for clarity this does not mean a change in name for the building, the Civic Offices. The term 'The Civic' seeks to capture the use of the Ground Floor space in a term that is more colloquial in nature and distinguishes it from the more formal name for the building. 'The Civic Hub' provides a more conventional name for the area. Members are asked to consider both options.

6. The partnership nature is critical to recognise, and the brand seeks to symbolise this. The partners working with EFDC on the Ground Floor are:

- DWP
- Citizens Advice
- Epping Forest Food Bank
- Changing Pathways
- Peabody
- Essex County Council Adult and Social Care
- Essex County Council Family Solutions
- Phoenix Futures
- Voluntary Action Epping Forest
- NACRO
- Epping Re-Use

7. Partners have been consulted with regard to the brand especially as any branding will be also used by themselves to signpost and promote their own services in the new Ground Floor area. This is not a rebranding for EFDC itself, but it is a brand to represent the Ground Floor partnership area. The EFDC communications team will be working with those partners to ensure there is joined-up usage of the brand.

8. The outcome of the work over the summer has provided two options, A and B, which are attached as Appendix A and B respectively. The design reflects the collaborative nature of the Ground Floor, not a wholly EFDC space but one where partners are also based. Importantly there has been very positive feedback from partners in relation to the common branding and design and a few quotes are provided below:

"I really like it...I can picture it so well after spending some time in the Hub yesterday. We are really looking forward to starting this"

"Very nice...it's so easy to visualise"

"Having spent some time at the Hub, it is now very easy to visualise, and this revised version of the branding fits so well. We are really looking forward to working out of the Hub with all the partners."

“It looks great and can’t wait to see it in real life”

9. The cost of the branding exercise is £19,450 including design and installation. The cost will be met from existing budget.

Reason for decision: To provide recommendations for consideration at Cabinet on 11th October 2021

Options considered and rejected:

Consultation undertaken: Consultation over the brand has taken place with Community Hub partners

Resource implications: The cost of the re-branding will be met from existing resources

Legal and Governance Implications: None

Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications: None

Background Papers: Appendices A and B attached

Impact Assessments:

Risk Management

Equality: