

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-017-2020/21

Date of meeting: 11th October 2021



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Customer and Partnerships

Subject: Branding for the Civic Offices Ground Floor

Responsible Officer: Rob Pavey (01992 564211).

Democratic Services: Adrian Hendry (01992 564246).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That approval be given to a Branding exercise for the Ground Floor of the Civic Offices;**
- (2) That approval be given to either Option A 'The Civic' or Option B 'The Civic Hub' presented with this report; and**
- (3) That Members note the comments made by Community Hub partners and the Stronger Communities Select Committee at their meeting on 23rd September 2021.**

Executive Summary:

The refurbishment of the Civic Offices building presented the opportunity to review its purpose and this the opportunity to provide a facility that can offer the local community a brand new contribution. The Ground Floor now is a destination for the community where the Council works with a range of other public and voluntary sector partners where solutions can be found in one place ranging from homelessness to debt advice to welfare benefits to well-being. This really is a step-change in the use of the Ground Floor and needs to be seen not as an Epping Forest District Council asset but one where we work with a range of other organisations to provide outcomes for the members of the community. To highlight and reflect this new start a branding is proposed for the Ground Floor to help showcase this new way of delivering services and improve the welcome experience for visitors to the building. Consultation around the design has been undertaken with Community Hub partners and Members of the Stronger Place Select Committee.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

To provide a branding for the Ground Floor to provide an improved visitor experience and to identify and promote the new service offering for the community.

Other Options for Action:

To not proceed with a branding for the Ground Floor area.
To seek alternative branding designs.

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 branding exercise was presented before the Stronger Place Select Committee on 23rd September. Members of the Committee were asked to comment on the branding exercise, the designs presented and the options of the ‘The Civic’ or ‘Civic Hub’. The Committee concluded that:

- a) It approved of the branding exercise taking place for the branding exercise taking place for the Ground Floor of the Civic Offices;
- b) There was a majority view supported the design of the branding;
- c) Of the two options provided to the Committee regarding the naming of the space ‘The Civic Hub’ was the preferred option.

10. The cost of the project will be £19,250 at a worst-case scenario but is anticipated to be below £15,000 and will be finally determined at the end of the project. the cost is built up from:

- the iterative process of the design branding;
- the production of the signage including highly resilient floor signposting and wall designs;
- installation by technicians of the signage within the building.

Resource Implications:

Cost of the exercise to be met from existing budget

Legal and Governance Implications:

None

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None

Consultation Undertaken:

Consultation on the design has been undertaken with Community Hub partners

Background Papers:

Appendices A and B to this report

Risk Management:

None

Equality Impact Assessment

1. Under s.149 of the Equality Act 2010, when making decisions, Epping District Council must have regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty, ie have due regard to:
 - eliminating unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, and other conduct prohibited by the Act,
 - advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not,
 - fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
2. The characteristics protected by the Equality Act are:
 - age
 - disability
 - gender
 - gender reassignment
 - marriage/civil partnership
 - pregnancy/maternity
 - race
 - religion/belief
 - sexual orientation.
3. In addition to the above protected characteristics you should consider the cross-cutting elements of the proposed policy, namely the social, economic and environmental impact (including rurality) as part of this assessment. These cross-cutting elements are not a characteristic protected by law but are regarded as good practice to include.
4. The Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) document should be used as a tool to test and analyse the nature and impact of either what we do or are planning to do in the future. It can be used flexibly for reviewing existing arrangements but in particular should enable identification where further consultation, engagement and data is required.
5. Use the questions in this document to record your findings. This should include the nature and extent of the impact on those likely to be affected by the proposed policy or change.
6. Where this EqIA relates to a continuing project, it must be reviewed and updated at each stage of the decision.
7. All **Cabinet, Council, and Portfolio Holder reports must be accompanied by an EqIA**. An EqIA should also be completed/reviewed at key stages of projects.
8. To assist you in completing this report, please ensure you read the guidance notes in the Equality Analysis Toolkit and refer to the following Factsheets:
 - Factsheet 1: Equality Profile of the Epping Forest District
 - Factsheet 2: Sources of information about equality protected characteristics
 - Factsheet 3: Glossary of equality related terms
 - Factsheet 4: Common misunderstandings about the Equality Duty
 - Factsheet 5: Frequently asked questions
 - Factsheet 6: Reporting equality analysis to a committee or other decision making body

Section 1: Identifying details
Your function, service area and team: Customer Services
If you are submitting this EqIA on behalf of another function, service area or team, specify the originating function, service area or team:
Title of policy or decision:
Officer completing the EqIA: Tel: Email:
Date of completing the assessment:

Section 2: Policy to be analysed	
2.1	<p>Is this a new policy (or decision) or a change to an existing policy, practice or project?</p> <p>It is a branding exercise for the Ground Floor to assist visitors to the building with the new service offering in that space.</p>
2.2	<p>Describe the main aims, objectives and purpose of the policy (or decision):</p> <p>To help showcase the new collaborative service offering provided by the Council and its partners. To assist service users in moving around the space with clear and effective signage.</p> <p>What outcome(s) are you hoping to achieve (ie decommissioning or commissioning a service)?</p> <p>As above</p>
2.3	<p>Does or will the policy or decision affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • service users • employees • the wider community or groups of people, particularly where there are areas of known inequalities? <p>It affects principally service users and the wider community who use the space.</p> <p>Will the policy or decision influence how organisations operate?</p> <p>No</p>
2.4	<p>Will the policy or decision involve substantial changes in resources?</p> <p>No</p>

2.5	<p>Is this policy or decision associated with any of the Council's other policies and how, if applicable, does the proposed policy support corporate outcomes?</p> <p>It supports the introduction of the new service offering for the Ground Floor of the Civic Offices.</p>
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Section 3: Evidence/data about the user population and consultation¹

As a minimum you must consider what is known about the population likely to be affected which will support your understanding of the impact of the policy, eg service uptake/usage, customer satisfaction surveys, staffing data, performance data, research information (national, regional and local data sources).

3.1	What does the information tell you about those groups identified?
3.2	Have you consulted or involved those groups that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision you want to implement? If so, what were their views and how have their views influenced your decision?
3.3	If you have not consulted or engaged with communities that are likely to be affected by the policy or decision, give details about when you intend to carry out consultation or provide reasons for why you feel this is not necessary:

Section 4: Impact of policy or decision

Use this section to assess any potential impact on equality groups based on what you now know.

Description of impact	Nature of impact Positive, neutral, adverse (explain why)	Extent of impact Low, medium, high (use L, M or H)
Age	N	
Disability	N	
Gender	N	
Gender reassignment	N	
Marriage/civil partnership	N	
Pregnancy/maternity	N	
Race	N	
Religion/belief	N	
Sexual orientation	N	

Section 5: Conclusion

		Tick Yes/No as appropriate	
5.1	Does the EqIA in Section 4 indicate that the policy or decision would have a medium or high adverse impact on one or more equality groups?	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	If ' YES ', use the action plan at Section 6 to describe the adverse impacts and what mitigating actions you could put in place.

Section 6: Action plan to address and monitor adverse impacts

What are the potential adverse impacts?	What are the mitigating actions?	Date they will be achieved.

Section 7: Sign off

**I confirm that this initial analysis has been completed appropriately.
(A typed signature is sufficient.)**

Signature of Head of Service:

Date:

Signature of person completing the EqIA: Rob Pavey

Date: 05/08/2021

Advice

Keep your director informed of all equality & diversity issues. We recommend that you forward a copy of every EqIA you undertake to the director responsible for the service area. Retain a copy of this EqIA for your records. If this EqIA relates to a continuing project, ensure this document is kept under review and updated, eg after a consultation has been undertaken.