

Report to:	Executive Cabinet Member Regenera	tion	
Date of meeting:	March 22 nd 2023		
Report of:	Director of Place	Report Number:	42295
Reporting Officer:	Paul Whittingham, Assistant Director Economic Development and Regeneration	Telephone Number:	01204 336042
Contact Officer:	Phil Lamb - Principal Project Officer	Telephone number	01204 336136
Report title:	Westhoughton Town Hall - Refurbishi	ment and Capital	Allocation
	Not Confidential		
	ontain information which warrants its co	nsideration in th	e absence of
the press or members	of the public.		
Purpose:	This report gives details of the propos Westhoughton Town Hall and seeks a District Centres Fund to deliver the Ph	pproval of fundir	ng from the
Recommendations: Decision:	 The Executive Cabinet Member is rec Approve the refurbishment of We out in this report; Approve a capital allocation of £1 Centres Fund to procure and deli Authorise the Director of Place ar Transformation and Corporate Prand costs in consultation with the Regeneration; and Authorise the Borough Solicitor to formalities where required. 	sthoughton Town .5 million from the ver the scheme; and Assistant Directoperty to finalise Executive Cabir	ne District ctor, the design net Member
Background documents: Signed:	Report to ECMDL dated 15/03/21 entitled 'Implementation of District Centre Priority Key Development Proposals – Phase 1 works' (ECMDL4846) Report to Cabinet dated 21/01/19 entitled 'Town Centres Strategy Funding' (CAB508) Report to Council dated 20/02/19 entitled 'Budget Update and Options 2019-21 (CEX011) Report to Council dated 20/02/19 entitled 'Corporate Capital and One-off Funding 2019-2022' (CEX046) Report to ECMDL dated 17/02/20 entitled 'Westhoughton District Centre Strategy' (ECMDL764).		
	Leader/Executive Cabinet Member	Monitoring Offic	er

Consultation with other officers			
Finance	Yes	18/01/23	David Shepherd
Legal	Yes	20/01/23	Louise McGuiness
HR	No		
Procurement	Yes	20/01/23	Gaynor Wright
Climate Change	Yes	16/01/23	Nicola Farrell
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes	18/01/23	Tammy Tatman
(a) Pre-consultation reports		No	
Is there a need to consult on the proposa	ıls?		
(b) Post consultation reports Please confirm that the consultation response has been taken into consideration in making the recommendations.		N/A	
Vision outcomes	1. Start	Well	Х
	2. Live V	Vell	х
Please identify the appropriate Vision	3. Age Well		х
outcome(s) that this report relates or	4. Prosperous		Х
contributes to by putting a cross in the	5. Clean and Green		Х
relevant box.	6. Stron	g and Distinctiv	re x

1. INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Executive Cabinet Member will be aware from the previous reports contained within the list of background documents of the masterplan process for Westhoughton, funding of £415,459 from the District Centres Fund to implement a number of Phase 1 Key Development Priority projects (KDPs) and more recently the approval of £2.3 million from the same fund to implement a new public realm scheme along Market Street.
- 1.2 This report seeks approval to refurbish the now vacant Westhoughton Town Hall to bring the building back into viable commercial and office use, thereby generating an income for the council that will help to protect the fabric of the building for future generations. The refurbishment and reuse of the Town Hall was an agreed KDP as the building is considered the most important in Westhoughton town centre and has laid vacant for the past 4 or 5 years since council services were centrally located.
- 1.2 The council has engaged its property partners PSP and Clear Futures (CF) in drawing up the plans and the report gives detail of the work to date and an update on the local marketing exercise undertaken to ascertain the level of local interest in the opportunities provided by the refurbishment.

2. ISSUES

- 2.1 The Masterplan for Westhoughton town centre was the subject of a formal public consultation exercise that ran from the 27th January 2020 to 23rd February 2020. A questionnaire was available both online and in hard copy at key locations in Westhoughton including the library, MP's office, and several shops. Two drop-in events took place at the library, on Wednesday 12th February 2020 from 2pm to 7pm and on Saturday 15th February between 10am and 2pm. Around 160 people attended the drop-in sessions and 159 responses to the questionnaire were received from a wide range of people and organisations.
- 2.2 The original proposal was for the conversion of surplus space within the town hall into a managed workspace development providing space for small businesses and 'start-up' space for new businesses with a ground floor commercial café to serve the business and be open to the public. Responses as part of the public consultation highlighted that 89% of respondents agreed or partly agreed to redevelop the Town Hall.
- 2.3 In addition to this the same number of respondents agreed that separate access to the upstairs of the library should be created to improve safety, security and visitor experience and that improvements to access arrangements at both the library and Carnegie Hall, together with simpler booking arrangements, should be investigated to increase the use of the hall. However, on cost grounds only the works to the Town Hall will be progressed at this time with works to the library and Carnegie Hall to follow as an additional phase, subject to funding being available.
- 2.4 The council's property partner, PSP, and wider design team were appointed by the council in February 2022 to consider several issues including:
 - Understand legal, design, planning, heritage, and cost implications of repurposing the buildings
 - Provide flexible space to meet community requirements
 - Continue to provide space for the Library and the Westhoughton Historical Society

 Understand what opportunity there is to provide commercial or leisure space to complement community uses and create footfall to support the library use, as well as provide commercial income to the council to help support the running and maintenance costs of the building

A number of surveys have also been undertaken including:

- Condition survey
- Measured survey
- Structural survey
- Mechanical and Engineering survey
- 2.5 In the summer of 2022 Clear Futures (CF) were engaged to take matters forward with a view to procuring a contractor for the works to the Town Hall. However, in autumn 2022 CF highlighted the lack of Tier 1 contractor interest to enter into a Design & Build Contract on the building. This resulted in them proceeding to de-risk the project by progressing the scheme to RIBA Stage 1 with the appointment of K2 Architects to develop the design, completion of intrusive surveys and the appointment of Lamb and Swift to undertake a marketing exercise and determine the level of local interest in leasing the building.

3. DESIGN APPROACH

- 3.1 Repurposing existing buildings is always a delicate balancing act. On the one hand, there is the requirement to respond to our strategic and operational needs. On the other, is obtaining the best fit for those needs in a building designed for different uses. In this scenario, there is also a need to preserve the features of the building that the community value. This tripartite challenge leans heavily towards an opportunity to drive market interest through the value of the building's unique character. If approved, the proposal will see the creation of an employment workspace hub within the Town Hall that has the potential to become a footfall driver and increase the overall vitality and viability of Westhoughton town centre.
- 3.2 The SWOT analysis undertaken identifies considerable benefits to preserving the building's existing qualities and the following objectives express this in the broadest terms:
 - Work with the grain of the building preserving its architectural qualities
 - Take a minimalist approach to design interventions
 - Match the budget to the level of intervention
 - Create designs that will attract operators/end users
 - Take a flexible approach to space planning that allows adaptation to various uses
- 3.3 The SWOT analysis has identified that the building would benefit from a more active and visually permeable façade. However, any such intervention must be sensitive to the original architecture. The proposal advocates enlarging several ground-floor windows, dropping their cills down to ground level, and allowing passers to see inside. This design solution will restore a sense of symmetry to the original building that was lost as part of the 1992 extension to it.
- 3.4 Based on the objectives listed above and the SWOT analysis the current design proposals are now outlined.

Spatial Configuration

- 3.5 Any future operator will likely want to maximise the ground floor's commercial benefits by making it accessible and attractive to the public.
- 3.6 Within the original 1904 ground floor structure, it is proposed to form a series of openings that sensitively merge some cellular office spaces to create an airy open-plan layout with a series of interconnected spaces linked together by fluid user circulation patterns. The openings will not go up to the ceiling to retain a memory of the original walls for posterity and will only interfere with existing features if doing so enhances the overall aesthetic quality of the space.
- 3.7 The ground floor of the 1992 extension offers several repurposing opportunities for both retail/commercial space and office use to create 3 separate spaces that complement the more cellular workspaces on the upper floors aimed at growing SMEs.
- 3.8 The workspace option offers an additional benefit: the building uses may be neatly compartmentalised for access and security. The circulation patterns will offer this configuration 24-hour access to the workspaces, while retail/commercial space and the Council Chamber can be independent and keep their own operating hours.
- 3.9 Only minor alterations are proposed to the first floor as the council will need to maintain access to the Council Chamber for their twice monthly Town Council meetings. The existing ceremonial axis on the ground floor will be utilised rather than access via a minor secondary entrance. Access and security between the offices and the Council Chamber will be maintained with a fire door between the grand staircase and the main corridor.
- 3.11 It is proposed that rest of the first floor focuses on four and six-person workspaces for incubating local SMEs, a meeting room, and an improved WC provision.
- 3.12 The proposal for the second floor is to see it consist of two larger offices that provide two twelveperson office spaces with self-contained facilities for established SMEs.
- 3.13 Overall, this spatial configuration offers all the facilities and spaces required for a typical business incubation hub in a town centre location for the creative and digital sectors. Layout plans for all floors can be found at Appendices 1-3.

Marketing Exercise

- 3.14 The local marketing exercise went live online in mid-November 2022 and an advertising board was erected on the Town Hall on Tuesday 22nd November. A leaflet drop was completed in late November and included all businesses on Market Street, Church Street, Pavilion Square, Park Road, Wingates, Chequerbent and Daisy Hill and the Bolton ran an article at the end of November.
- 3.15 To date 12 expressions of interest have been received all expressions have been ragged using the following criteria

Red No longer interested after initial enquiry

Amber Use unlikely to fit in with the accommodation but remains a live enquiry

Green Ongoing live enquiry

3.16 Of the 12 enquiries 2 were ragged as red and these enquiries will not be taken forward. In terms of the remaining 10 live enquiries they can be broken down as follows with the gym ragged as amber as its use is unlikely to work within the building:

End Use	No. of Enquiries	RAG Rating	
Opticians	1	Green	
Bar/restaurant	2	Green	
GMP presence	1	Green	
Gym	2	Amber	
Shared office space	1	Green	
Café/takeaway	1	Green	
Charity shop	1	Green	
Cinema with food offering	1	Green	

- 3.17 Using industry norms, Lamb and Swift have attempted to give the financial implications of each end use from a rent free perspective and these range from 3 years for the cinema to a 6-12 month period for all other uses. No figure has been given for GMP given their presence would effectively be a drop in facility for officers with WC provision, kitchen facilities and a small meeting room.
- 3.18 The next steps in the marketing campaign will see national and regional occupiers targeted to 6th March 2023 with the online presence continuing and further mailshots undertaken. This will ensure we have reached the maximum number of interested parties after which all enquiries will be assessed. One aspect to note is that the council is keen to ensure there is not a proliferation of uses within the town centre with new businesses competing against established ones. A survey has been undertaken with all current uses in the town centre mapped and this will be refreshed to take account of any changes.
- 3.19 All current live enquiries would seek to move into the refurbished Town Hall within the next 12-18 months.

Planning Process

3.20 The proposals do not require a planning application for a change of use as recent changes to the Use Classes Order have combined office and retail space into the same Use Class. However, the proposal to increase the size of the windows to give a greater presence will require a planning application and accompanying Design & Access Statement to be submitted.

4. PROGRAMME OF WORKS

4.1 While the final designs are still being tweaked, the anticipated programme is shown below. However, it should be noted that these timings are subject to change given current issues with the supply of materials:

•	Planning application submission	March 2023
•	Intrusive survey works completed	April 2023
•	Planning application determination	June 2023
•	Commencement of main works on site	September 2023
•	Completion of main works on site	September 2024

5. OPTIONS

5.1 As part of the proposals 2 options were considered:

Option 1: Do nothing – Such an approach will see the fabric of the building decay to a point where its refurbishment would be even more costly or, worse still, the building will fall into disrepair and reach a point where demolition or its disposal is the only option.

Option 2 Implement the proposed scheme – This option sees major investment in the fabric of the building, securing its future use for years to come. The rental income afforded by the refurbishment gives the council the means to continually invest in the building and may assist with the costs of a potential additional future phase of works to the library and Carnegie Hall building.

5.2 For the reasons set out above, Option 2 is recommended and the Executive Cabinet Member is therefore requested to approve the proposals and the funding as set out in this report.

6. IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial

- 6.1.1 In 2017 Cabinet approved capital allocations of £2.6m from the Capital programme for improvements works to the Town Hall. To date, some £800k of this allocation has been used for major roof repairs that has now ensured the building is watertight. This leaves £1.8 million unallocated.
- 6.1.2 On 21st January 2019 Cabinet approved a £12m allocation of funding from the £100m Town Centre Strategy Fund to carry out targeted interventions in Farnworth, Horwich, Westhoughton and Little Lever. On the 20th February 2019 Full Council approved an additional £4m of funding from the 2019/20 Capital Programme for further investment in town centres, (principally in Farnworth town centre) subject to capital receipts being raised to this amount.
- 6.1.3 The current design proposals have been costed at £3.5 million including all fees and works to the Council Chamber, a contingency which includes an amount for asbestos and rotten timbers caused by water ingress, an allowance for inflation to the midpoint of construction and an allowance for officer time which must now be included within all capital projects. This leaves a budget deficit of £1.7million.
- 6.1.4 An allocation of £200k from the Backlog Maintenance budget has been made to cover the cost of the works to the Council Chamber. Should the cost of works to the Council Chamber exceed the £200k it will again be provided via this source.
- 6.1.5 The table below highlights the different funding streams that make up the £3.5 million construction costs

Funding Source	Amount
Unallocated Corporate Allocation	£1,800,000
District Centres Funding (sought)	£1,500,000
Backlog Maintenance	£ 200,000
Total	£3,500,000

6.1.6 The Executive Cabinet Member is therefore requested to approve a capital allocation of £1.5 million from District Centres Fund.

6.2 Legal/Procurement

- 6.2.1 The Executive Cabinet Member will be aware that the council has a compliant procurement framework under NEC contract and SPA (strategic partner agreement) with Clear Futures, that allows access to procurement, delivery consultants and Tier 1 construction contractors on a preapproved framework that allows quick access to market and efficient flow through the RIBA stages of project delivery.
- 6.2.2 Clear Futures provides quick, compliant access to a range of tier 1 and tier 2 expertise, which will enable the project to be delivered with time and cost assurances within a tight timeframe, but with value for money and quality guarantees.
- 6.2.3 Clear Futures will therefore be retained to take the Westhoughton Town Hall refurbishment project to the RIBA Stage 2 at which point cost certainty will be secured.
- 6.3 HR
- 6.3.1 None.

6.4 Climate Change

6.4.1 All climate change impacts will be fully considered within the construction/refurbishment phase but as mentioned within the main body of the report, the proposal will seek to maintain as much architectural integrity of the building as possible and minimise interventions.

6.5 Other

6.5.1 None

7. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a general duty to have due regards to the need to:
 - 1. **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act:
 - 2. **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.
- 7.2 Due to the nature of the proposals, it is possible that there could be some adverse impact for the people with disabilities during works to Market Street due to potential pavement narrowing or closure at times. However, the potential for differential impact will be mitigated or prevented through the best practice/considerate construction techniques. This analysis is set out in more detail in the EIA.

8. **VISION 2030**

8.1 The Bolton 2030 Vision is summarised as follows:

"Bolton will be a vibrant place, built on strong cohesive communities, successful businesses and healthy residents."

8.2. The proposals contained within this report are focused on the delivery of the Bolton 2030 Vision and will contribute to the delivery of the outcomes set out in the Vision 2030.

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The need to secure the future of the Town Hall resulted in this proposal becoming a KDP within the approved masterplan for Westhoughton town centre. The scheme, while more developed than the original proposal as you would expect, remains in line with the comments received as part of the masterplan public consultation in that it will see a mixed use redevelopment of the Town Hall.
- 9.2 The proposal has the support of Ward Members and the Westhoughton Town Centre Steering Group with no adverse comments received.
- 9.3 Officers have engaged with the Westhoughton Town Hall Community Focus Group and requested their Expression of Interest for community use within the Town Hall in accordance with the marketing exercise referred to earlier in this report.

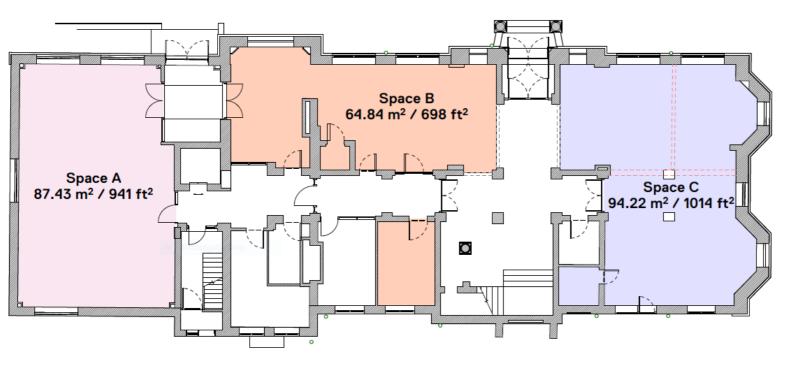
10 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The Executive Cabinet Member is requested to:
 - 1) Approve the refurbishment of Westhoughton Town Hall as set out in this report;
 - 2) Approve a capital allocation of £1.5 million from the District Centres Fund to procure and deliver the scheme;
 - 3) Authorise the Director of Place and Assistant Director, Transformation and Corporate Property to finalise the design and costs in consultation with the Executive Cabinet Member Regeneration; and
 - 4) Authorise the Borough Solicitor to carry out all necessary legal formalities where required

Appendix 1

Proposed Ground Floor Layout



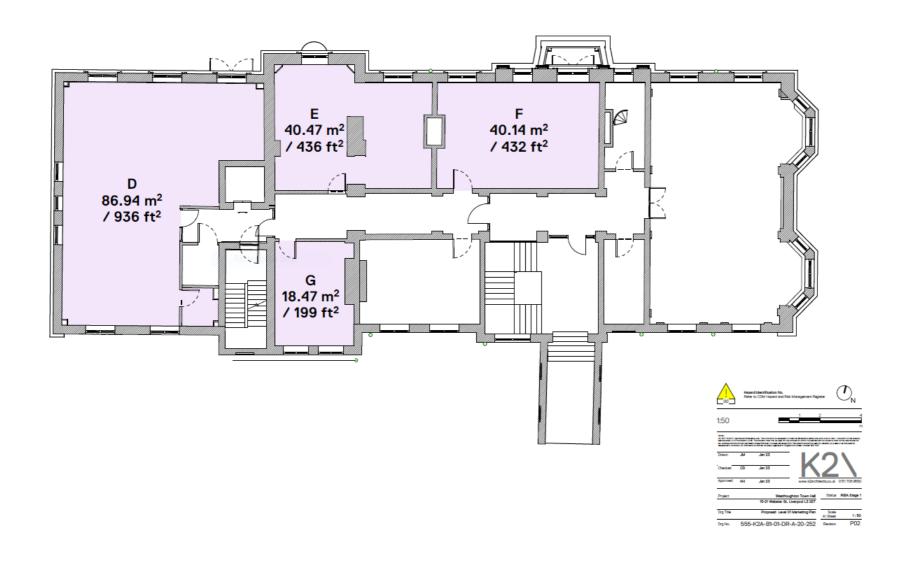




Appendix 2

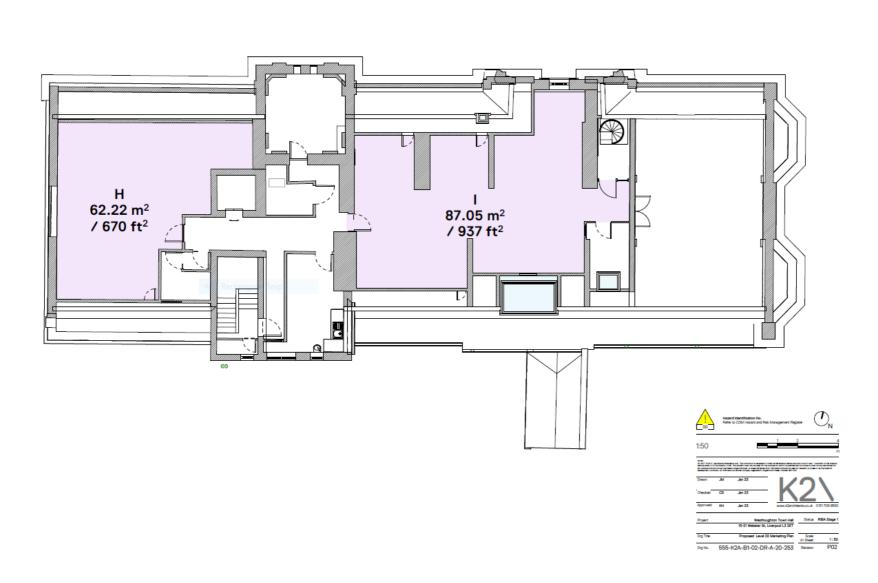
Proposed First Floor Layout





Appendix 3

Proposed Second Floor Layout



Equality Impact Assessment

Title of report or proposal:
Westhoughton Town Hall – Refurbishment and Capital Allocation

Directorate:	Place
Section:	Growth & Regeneration
Date:	16/01/23

Public sector bodies need to be able to evidence that they have given due regard to the impact and potential impact on all people with 'protected characteristics' in shaping policy, in delivering services, and in relation to their own employees.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the council has a general duty to have due regard to the need to:

- 1. **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- 2. **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
- 3. **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

By completing the following questions the three parts of the equality duty will be consciously considered as part of the decision-making process.

Details of the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment must also be included in the main body of the report.

1. Describe in summary the aims, objectives and purpose of the proposal, including desired outcomes.

The report gives details of and seeks approval for the refurbishment and active use of Westhoughton Town Hall The proposal is key Development Priority (KDP) within the approved masterplan for Westhoughton town centre.

2. Is this a new policy / function / service or review of existing one?

The proposal is not new and merely seeks approval for the refurbishment and commercial use of the Town Hall

3. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the proposal?

The main stakeholders are the council, businesses, residents, and visitors who will have an enhanced town centre building. The rental income from the commercial use will assist the council in protecting the fabric of the building for future generations.

4. In summary, what are the anticipated (positive or negative) impacts of the proposal?

The proposals will create a much improved environment with active frontages along the building facades.

5. What, if any, cumulative impact could the proposal have?

The proposal will breathe new life into a building that has been vacant for the past 3-4 years. Given the building is the most important in Westhoughton town centre it will help bring back a sense of community pride in it. A refurbished town hall will allow new businesses to flourish and a fully occupied building will protect the fabric of the building for future generations.

6. With regard to the stakeholders identified above and the diversity groups set out below:

	Is there any potential for (positive or negative) differential impact? Could this lead to adverse impact and if so what? List any adverse impacts identified from data or engagement	Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group, or for any other reason? Please state why	Please detail what actions you will take to remedy any identified adverse impact i.e. actions to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations
Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour or nationality, and caste, and includes refugees and migrants; and gypsies and travellers	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Religion or belief (this includes any religion with a clear structure and belief system. Belief means any religious or philosophical belief. The Act also covers lack of religion or belief)	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Disability (a person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities)	There is great potential positive differential impact though enhancements to the entrances to the Town Hall and a more disabled friendly building in general	N/A	The long terms risk of differential impact will be prevented through the Planning and Building Control processes that will ensure the building is DDA compliant.

Sex / Gender	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Gender reassignment / Gender identity (a person who's deeply felt and individual experience of gender may not correspond to the sex assigned to them at birth, they may or may not propose to, start, or complete a process to change their gender. A person does not need to be under medical supervision to be protected)	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Age (people of all ages)	There is great potential positive differential impact though the design of the Town Hall refurbishment to give a more age friendly building in general.	N/A	The long terms risk of differential impact will be prevented through the Planning and Building Control processes that will ensure the building is compliant withal appropriate regulations.
Sexual orientation - people who are lesbian, gay, and bisexual.	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Marriage and civil partnership (Only in relation to due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination)	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A

Caring status (including pregnancy & maternity)	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Socio-economic	There are no differential impacts to this diversity group.	N/A	N/A
Other comments or issues.	N/A		
Please provide a list of the evidence used to inform this EIA, such as the results of consultation or other engagement, service take-up, service monitoring, surveys, stakeholder comments and complaints where appropriate.	The masterplan proposals for Westhoughton town centre were the subject of a thorough public consultation process with drop in sessions arranged on different days of the week and at different times to ensure every opportunity for participation was given. Prior to receiving formal approval by the Executive Cabinet Member it was agreed by the Westhoughton Town Centre Steering Group made up of all Ward Members, Town Council members, local businesses, GMP and a range local organisations. The proposal is broadly in line with masterplan.		

This EIA form and report has been checked and countersigned by the Directorate Equalities Officer before proceeding to Executive Cabinet Member(s)

Please confirm the outcome of this EIA:

No major impact identified, therefore no major changes required – proceed				
Adjustments to remove barriers / promo proceed	ote equality (mitigate impact) have been identified – X			
Positive impact for one or more groups	justified on the grounds of promoting equality - proceed			
Continue despite having identified potential for adverse impact/missed opportunities for promoting equality – this requires a strong justification				
The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and rethink				
Contact Officer				
Name:	Phil Lamb			
Date:	16/01/23			
Directorate Equalities Lead Officer				
Name:	Tammy Tatman			
Date:	19/01/23			