

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: 13 MARCH 2012
 title: GALLERY / TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE MERGER
 submitted by: JOHN HEAP, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
 principal author: CHRIS HUGHES, HEAD OF CULTURAL & LEISURE SERVICES

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform members of the decision to move the tourist information centre from the Council Offices to the Platform Gallery.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

Council Priorities – this contributes to a restructure of service in order to achieve the budgetary savings required to achieve a balance budget for 2012/13.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The merger of the TIC and Gallery is as a result of the package of measures agreed by the Council's Policy & Finance Committee in order to generate the savings required to provide a balanced budget for 2012/13.

2.2 Original proposals suggested that TIC could remain within the Council Offices and be part of the new Contact Centre offer. This would probably have presented the greatest cash saving, but it was felt that it would not be compatible with the core offer of the new contact centre.

2.3 Other locations were considered, and it was concluded that the Gallery site offered the best alternative.

3 CURRENT SITUATION

Given that the overall efficiency package is due to take effect from April 2012, staff from both facilities have been meeting to discuss the practical issues associated with the merger. These have included:

- Roles / responsibilities
- Staffing structures
- Space allocation
- Accommodation issues

4 ISSUES

Whilst it is possible to merge the two services, it does give us a number of challenges to overcome:

- **Accommodation** – at the moment, the Gallery has a central reception that can accommodate up to two people, and a small office to accommodate an additional person, but this is by no means private. Storage is also limited as it stands, and demands will further increase with the relocation of TIC. The Council's surveying section identified a number of physical changes needed in order to make the building fit for purpose. These are:

- **Removal of the existing reception**, and creation of a new reception to accommodate the combined service;
- **Provision of a dedicated office** to enable combined administrative duties to function properly;
- **Additional storage**

This proposal was presented to, and agreed by, Special Policy & Finance Committee on 7 February 2012, on the understanding that a business plan be presented to the next meeting.

- **Space allocation** – given the constraints of the building, it is not possible for both functions to have the same space they currently have and, therefore, compromises will have to be made in each case. This will mean TIC having less display and retail space, and a reduction in gallery retail space. It is, therefore, not possible for both services to remain separate entities under the same roof, so staff will need to multi-task, and retail will be combined.
- **Staffing** – staff from both sides will need to learn new skills in order to fulfil the new dual function. There are also two supervisory positions, and there will only need to be one in the revised structure. There may also be the need to allocate some officer-time away from the new facility, to support other tourism administrative functions that are currently carried out within the TIC. Overall management responsibility will change. The new tourism & events officer post is no longer responsible for arts & heritage, so responsibility will now sit with the Leisure Facilities Manager (title and job description to be amended), and this will include overall responsibility for the new Gallery / Information Centre.
- **Timescales** – as the development of the new contact centre cannot happen until the TIC has moved out, creation of the new Gallery / Information Centre has a demanding timetable. It is hoped that the physical works to the building will begin at the end of March (subject to a successful tendering process), and last for around four weeks, allowing the new facility to become operational in early May.

5 RISK ASSESSMENT

Approval of this report may have the following implications:

- **Resources**

- **Capital:** the estimated cost of the physical works is £49,200, but it is hoped that, by combining it with works to the contact centre, some efficiencies will emerge;

There is an expectation that there will be a revenue saving through merging the two services. The only likely source of this is staffing and, more specifically, the combined casual staff budgets, which currently total £11,750;

- **Income:** Gallery income plays an important role in the net revenue cost of the operation, and so any changes due to space allocations will have to be taken into account;

The building will be closed during the alterations, so further adjustments will need to be made for loss of income during this period.

These issues will be factored into the business plan to be presented to Policy & Finance Committee on 27 March 2012.

- **Technical, Environmental and Legal** – new job descriptions / staff roles will need to be developed and agreed in order to ensure the new arrangements operate effectively.
- **Political** – the merger is one of a range of changes required to meet the Council's savings. Although there are some operational difficulties, officers will ensure that there is a smooth transition.
- **Reputation** – given that there are compromises within each function, it is vital that the new service is launched in a positive manner in order to offset any pre-conceived concerns.

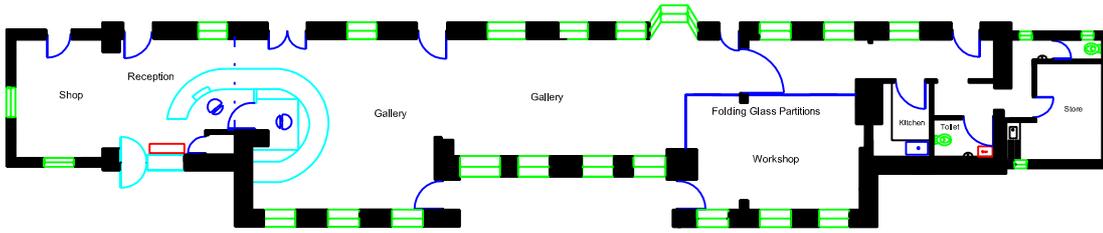
6 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**
Notes the contents of the report.

JOHN C HEAP
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

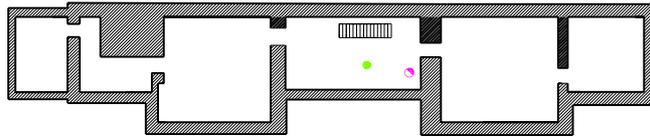
Enclosures: current and proposed building layout

For further information, please contact Chris Hughes 01200 414479

Existing Layout



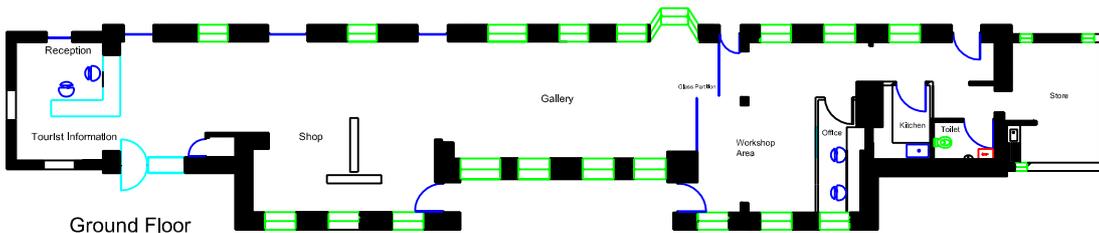
Ground Floor



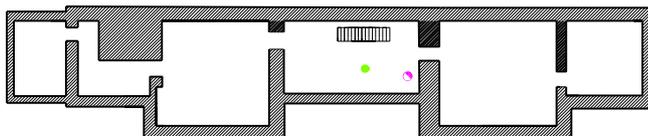
Basement

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| DRAWING | | |
| EXISTING PLAN | | |
| PROJECT | | |
| PLATFORM GALLERY STATION ROAD CLITHEROE LANCASHIRE | | |
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| 08/10 | T.L. | |
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| RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL | | |

Option B



Ground Floor



Basement

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| DRAWING | | |
| OPTION B | | |
| PROJECT | | |
| PLATFORM GALLERY STATION ROAD CLITHEROE LANCASHIRE | | |
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