

Briefing Note for Forward Plan Select Committee – 24th September 2009

Civic Centre and Brent House

The original brief for the civic centre sought to accommodate 1250 staff in the building, requiring Brent House to be retained as council offices. Implicit in this is the additional financing and revenue costs of running Brent House as a second major council office building. Brent House accommodates around 720 Council staff (permanent and agency).

Officers have been exploring the potential for providing space for more staff within the civic centre. Hopkins Architects, the Council's design team, have developed options that could provide space for 1830 people at a 10 person to 8 desk ratio or 2090 at a 10 person to 7 desk ratio. This option is being developed to concept design level and will be presented to the Executive in October.

Under this option the building footprint of the Civic centre has not changed, the increased numbers are achieved through an additional floor and a mezzanine floor in the office areas only. The additional space provides greater scope to share accommodation with key partners and therefore improve our prospects for greater joint service delivery and efficiency.

The ability to accommodate more staff in the building enhances the business case for the civic centre. It also facilitates greater efficiency savings and improved working conditions for more staff by consolidating into one building and enables the 'One Council' approach – promoted in the Council's Improvement and efficiency strategy 2008-2012, to be delivered more effectively, if a higher proportion of Council staff are able to work in the new building.

The council's accommodation strategy has for a number of years taken into account the potential effect of the Civic Centre in the retention and disposal strategy of the council's main office portfolio.

The release of Brent House presents a significant opportunity for efficiency savings and the scope to consider a mixed use redevelopment of the site and the adjoining sites. Officers are in very early stages of considering options for Brent House and there is considerable work ahead before information will be available for member consideration.

**Contact: Aktar Choudhury (Assistant Director, Civic Centre Programme)
e-mail: aktar.choudhury@brent.gov.uk**