

Agenda Item 3

For decision - Making improvements to the structure of Frome Town Hall

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Summary

Following the commissioned Condition and Maintenance report of the Town Hall from Easton Bevins and a retrofit assessment of the Town Hall, this report proposes that we carry out the actions detailed in the condition report and engage a specialist consultant to draw up a detailed retrofit plan.

Background

It is important that we maintain FTC buildings in good condition and timely maintenance work is essential to ensure that the cost of future works are kept to a minimum. In addition, we want to make our buildings as energy efficient as possible.

We have been implementing a rolling five year building maintenance plan for the Town Hall and Cllrs are regularly updated on works planned and carried out. Following some significant leaks in the roof over the recent months, we commissioned a condition report from Easton Bevins to advise us on the condition of the building and what needs fixing beyond our regular maintenance programme.

Cllrs will also recall that our Retrofit Officer also delivered a retrofit assessment of the Town Hall.

You can read those reports in depth here on website here:

[Appendix 3.1 Condition and Maintenance report](#)

[Appendix 3.2 Town Hall Retrofit report](#)

Condition and Maintenance Report

The Condition and Maintenance Report for Frome Town Hall, prepared by James Chinn (Member of Chartered Institute of Building) of Easton Bevins, provides an assessment of the building's current state, outlining required maintenance actions to ensure safety and prevent further deterioration. We asked for recommendations for year 1, years 2-5 and years 5-10. Key recommendations for Year 1 include repairs to the external stonework, roof, and internal areas, with a total estimated cost of £53,337. The report also emphasises the need for immediate attention to specific areas, such as the entrance stair balustrades, window restrictors, and tree maintenance. This report highlights the building's generally satisfactory condition but stresses the importance of some immediate repairs to avoid higher future costs.

Retrofit Report

The Retrofit Report presents a high-level assessment of Frome Town Hall's energy performance, with recommendations to improve efficiency, comfort, and reduce carbon emissions. The building, though located within a conservation area, has substantial potential for energy improvements. Key suggestions include enhancing insulation in the loft, upgrading the heating system, and increasing ventilation to combat condensation. The report also proposes a long-term plan for integrating renewable energy technologies, such as solar PV and heat pumps, and highlights the importance of planning these upgrades over a five-year period. This approach would help Frome Town Hall align with sustainability goals while preserving the building's heritage and reducing operational costs.

Conclusions

To protect the Town Hall and following discussion with the Retrofit Officer and local builders, it is concluded that there would be little benefit in implementing the retrofit measures before addressing the water ingress issues. Therefore, it is proposed that to get to a point where we can carry out retrofit measures, we first carry out the following measures as recommended by the Easton Bevins report:

All of the year 1 recommendations = £53k + line 2-02 Masonry year 2-5 work listed on the report to the value of £90K.

By conflating the year 1 and the year 2-5 Masonry work only an additional £37k will be required due to economies of scale, dual use of scaffolding, project management etc. Significant savings of around £50K can be made if the work is delivered under one contract.

Ongoing maintenance work of the Town Hall will continue in parallel with this work. This work is budgeted for in the Town Hall maintenance budget in the work programme each year.

This will also mean that the building will be secure from water ingress and that the envelope of the building is fit for subsequent retrofit work. The next step to ensure that the Town Hall meets its sustainability goals is to find a specialist retrofit consultant who can write a detailed schedule and framework for the next five years.

Recommendations

1. Recommend to Council that £100k is allocated in next year's work programme for works to the Town Hall and a retrofit plan (£56k use of existing Town Hall EMR & £44k General Reserves) and divided in the following way:
 - a. £90k for immediate repairs as detailed in the Condition Report.
 - b. Commission a planning consultant to draft a five-year implementation plan for the retrofit, with proposals to be presented at the next appropriate committee meeting, estimated cost £10k
2. Delegate to the Business Manager and the Marketing and Comms Manger to implement points 1 and 2 above through to completion.