

North Hertfordshire District Council



## **HITCHIN TOWN HALL** MUSEUM & COMMUNITY VENUE



A Business Plan Prepared by Head of Community & Cultural Services

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Version 1.0

### **Acknowledgements**

North Hertfordshire District Council would like to acknowledge the support of the following in preparing this Plan: The Feasibility Working Group for their input into the designs and proposals for the building, Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams Architects, who have provided the architectural feasibility relating to possible modifications of the building, Strategic Leisure for their work on the footfall and income modelling, and the service staff and accountancy team for the benefit of their expertise.

### **Colophon**

This Plan was prepared by the Community & Cultural Services team to allow NHDC members an opportunity to consider the development of a museum service within the Hitchin Town Hall site.

Information contained within this plan can be considered to be commercially sensitive and its distribution is therefore restricted.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

North Hertfordshire District Council has recognised the need to change the way it delivers a number of its services in order to secure their long term future and viability. These changes are needed in order to ensure that the services provided are of a quality to meet the needs and aspirations of our communities.

Aspiration to address the short comings in the Cultural/Museums service were identified in 2005 following a Fundamental Service Review. This identified lack of public toilets, access to upper floor levels for those with mobility problems, and lack of teaching space as key negatives affecting the service provided. In addition, whilst an attractive and historic town centre asset, Hitchin Town Hall has been identified as needing a major upgrade for modern operation and its on-going annual subsidy has led NHDC to look at alternative usages for this facility.

This plan sets out details relating to the regeneration of Hitchin Town Hall as a refurbished museums and community venue, not only to serve the people of Hitchin and its rural hinterland but also for the wider district. It would become the only NHDC operated museum.

This project is based on modification of HTH to incorporate a new museum into the main hall space, which will have a mezzanine floor added but at the same time retaining community usage of Gymnasium and Lucas Room. In addition a franchised Bar/Café would serve the users of the whole facility.

With the agreement of Hitchin Town Hall Workman's and Gymnasium Trust the site will be managed as one entity, with the Museums & Galleries team taking over responsibility for hall hire and management of the site.

Following completion of the refurbishment, Hitchin Town Hall will be re-launched as a venue offering two rooms for hire with greatly improved facilities and appeal, in addition to allowing a much improved museum facility. The project will require investment in the region of £3.4M but will allow NHDC to significantly reduce its annual running costs, and ensure services on the site are accessible to all.

## 1. ASSET BASED DEVELOPMENT OF THE NORTH HERTS MUSEUMS SERVICE & HITCHIN TOWN HALL

### The North Herts Museum Service

A Fundamental Service Review of the North Hertfordshire District Council operated Museums Service was undertaken during 2005. This looked not only at the Museums Service operated by NHDC but its relationship to the other museums in the district, in order to achieve the principles of Best Value for the residents of North Hertfordshire. The results are summarised as follows:

The review group believed that there was an opportunity to make significant changes and reinvest in a Heritage and Culture service. These changes would improve the overall quality of service to our community, working in partnership with the other not for profit organisations to deliver a district wide heritage and cultural service. These changes would also address the issues such as the ageing and inadequate buildings, and high annual revenue costs of the existing service.

*By using the services resources differently; moving the focus away from just the delivery of a direct service, and investing in empowering and enabling the active voluntary not for profit sector to jointly promote the district's heritage and culture, we can retain a local focus and achieve a significantly enhanced service.*

*The review group therefore recommends that the three ageing museum buildings (Burymead; Hitchin Museum; and Letchworth Museum) should be closed; to be replaced by one purpose built district wide museum, gallery and community venue located in a town centre. In addition, a new storage, resource and research centre, (probably out of town) should be established.*

An annual revenue savings target of £150,000 for the service was agreed, with much of the savings being dependant upon the achievement of the building changes identified above.

Subsequent to this a Project Board was established for the development of a business case for the Capital Works projects identified within the improvement plan. The work on developing a business case for a new collections centre was initially prioritised, given its smaller scale. However, at its meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009, Cabinet considered a report of the Heads of Community Development & Cultural Services and Financial Services in order to provide additional potential efficiencies to help produce a balanced budget for 2009/10. It provided relevant information on a proposal to change the timescale for the closure of a museum, envisaged in the Museums FSR. This report also outlined the work undertaken to look at possible alternative sites and how Hitchin Town Hall site was identified as the preferred option for more detailed study.

An initial feasibility study was commissioned from Cragg Management Services to establish 'proof of concept'. This paper was subsequently prepared for submission to the Council's Asset Management Group as a necessary stage in securing approval for capital expenditure, and to help frame the terms of reference for a comprehensive feasibility study.

Following on from this in May 2009 a comprehensive feasibility study was commissioned from Buttress Fuller Alsop William Architects (BFAW) in order to ascertain the suitability or otherwise of the future use of Hitchin Town Hall as a North Hertfordshire Museum. To establish the cost and timeframes of the work involved whilst also looking at the extent it would be possible to retain use of the building as a hall. To house as many of the exiting community users as possible.

The Brief for this work included the need for professional advice in relation to the following issues; structural feasibility; space utilisation efficiency and functionality; consideration of how to maximise existing (or alternative other) community uses of the Town Hall; environmental performance and sustainability; scheme costs; advice on application to the HLF for grant-aid; construction phase health and safety implications; project completion timescale; local planning issues.

This draft management plan is based upon the preferred design option for space utilisation within the Hitchin Town Hall building, which was reported to NHDC's Cabinet and Council in December 2009.

### **Hitchin Town Hall**

The decision to consider the transfer of Hitchin Town Hall to a third party operator was made by Council at its meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2006, with the budget saving described as:

*“Transfer of Hitchin Town Hall to third party with no residual (direct) costs to the Council”.* in keeping with the Council's policy that:

*“Where appropriate, the Council aspires to move to the voluntary management for all of its community centres, village halls and public halls”.*

A number of options to do this have been considered since this date, including market testing. The last attempt was made in 2007/08, when the Council considered the disposal by long lease to Hitchin Town Hall to a preferred third party operator, Hitchin Town Centre Initiative (HTCI). More specifically, Cabinet at its 29<sup>th</sup> January 2008 meeting agreed proposals to submit a joint application by the Council and Hitchin Town Centre Initiative for capital funding from the Community Asset Fund (CAF) which was prepared and submitted by the deadline date 15<sup>th</sup> November 2007. The application progressed from the initial to the detailed assessment stage in January 2008, but unfortunately this was not ultimately successful. The investment identified as necessary at this time in Hitchin Town Hall to retain its use as a community venue was £930,000.

Cabinet confirmed that the longer term running of Hitchin Town Hall must be on a sustainable business basis and a detailed Business Plan to enable the HTCI to operate successfully was to be developed. The CAF decision letter explained that, when assessed against the relevant

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criteria listed in the programme guidance notes, an offer of a grant could not be made because the Big Lottery Fund's England Committee felt that the evidence provided did not demonstrate the need for the project as clearly as other applications it had considered.

During the autumn of 2005, HTCI was successful in securing a bursary from the Market Towns Asset Development Programme, funded through EEDA (East of England Development Agency), for the purpose of undertaking a feasibility study as to whether it could take on the management of the hall. Subsequently HTCI commissioned an independent consultant to prepare a Business Plan on the opportunities presented in taking on the management of the Hitchin Town Hall. Officers also met with HTCI to set out clearly the Council expectations in terms of lease arrangements. No funding from NHDC for the necessary capital works was identified so this approach could not be progressed. However Cabinet agreed to adopt a multi-strand approach to the future planning for Hitchin Town Hall, and expressed its wish for HTCI to retain an interest in the longer term future development of Hitchin Town Hall as part of the wider regeneration of the town centre and its associated activities.

The Service & Financial Planning process (2005/06) approved the saving of the running costs of the Council managing this facility, £58,000 in 2007/08 and thereafter. In light of the report to Cabinet highlighting that a final decision on the application for external funding as part of this joint working not being made until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008, provision was made to continue the revenue support for the Town Hall for the full financial year 2008/09. The Working Budget for covering the cost of operating Hitchin Town Hall in 2009/2010 has increased to £74,760 per annum, and this is currently subject to annual agreement as part of the annual Service & Financial Planning process.

In line with Cabinet's request to explore other options for the longer term viability of Hitchin Town Hall, this building was considered as a possible one for conversion to incorporate the Museum given that no other sustainable usage had been identified. Feasibility work for Museum usage was commissioned from BFAW, and this Business Plan incorporates many of the findings from their report.

## **2. HITCHIN TOWN HALL**

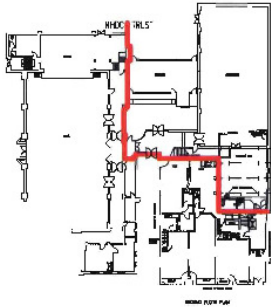
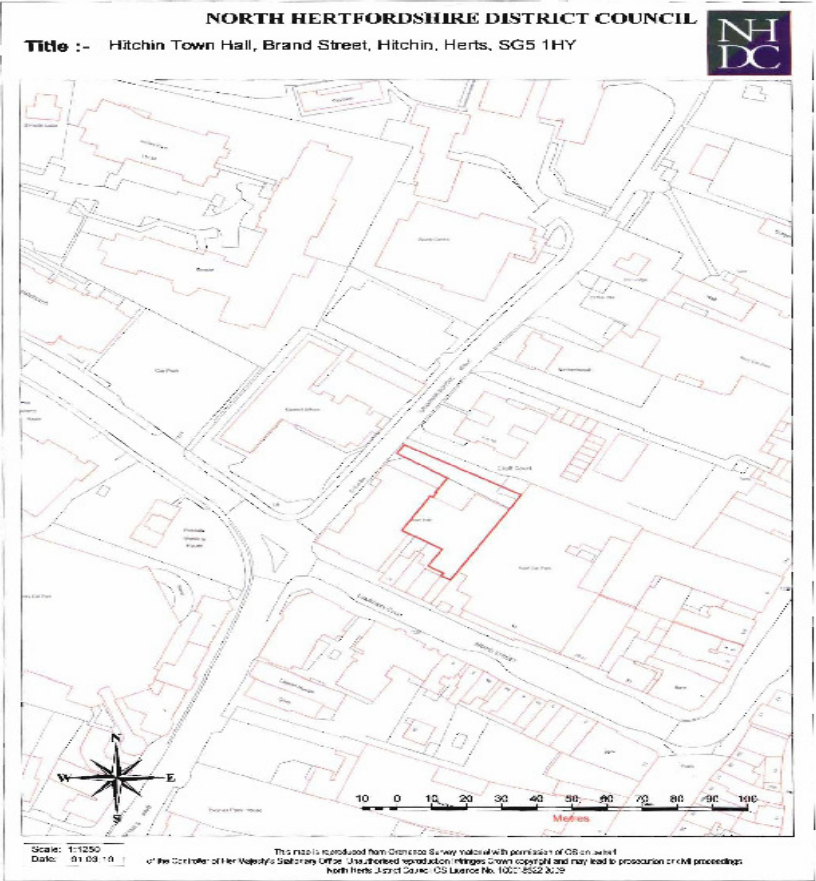
Hitchin Town Hall was built in 1901 on a site donated to the Town at what was then the edge of Hitchin town centre. The town hall building comprises a large assembly hall (Mountford Hall) with a stage, sprung wooden dance floor, a separate bar and toilet facilities. The stage is a shallow assembly hall stage without full fly and wings. It can accommodate up to 500 people standing and dancing, 250 seated. It is currently licensed for entertainment including music and dancing by North Hertfordshire District Council.

A smaller space – the Lucas Room on the first floor is also available as a meeting room for up to 40 people.

To the SE of the Town Hall site are a series of linked buildings of various dates ('the Institute Building') that have been extensively altered over the years and include a 2,200sq ft gymnasium, changing rooms and offices. These were formally the Mechanics Institute and Workmen's Hall and have been informally managed together with the Town Hall since at least the 1960's. This area of the building is operated on behalf of the Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasium and Workman's Hall Trust, which is administered on behalf of the Trustees by a NHDC Subcommittee of Cabinet.

**Plans of the hall and land holdings on site**





3. DEVELOPING THE ASSETS

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Hitchin Town Hall is currently an unsustainable asset. To increase its sustainability it needs:-

- A major building upgrade and transformation of the built fabric of the site
- An improvement in the value for money and community benefit delivered from this site.

NHDC believes that the current HTH building and its fabric is in need of significant investment in order that it can better serve the needs of its community. The scale of building and its age and character make it expensive to maintain and manage. The hall operates in a volatile and competitive market which restricts the income that it is possible to generate from the hire of its rooms. Its current building layout and usage make it difficult to staff, requiring significant subsidy by NHDC. This has led to the desire to look at alternative usage of this site.

This proposal therefore looks to use the large assembly hall (Mountford Hall) to house the North Hertfordshire Museums Service, to become the sole museum and exhibition space operated by NHDC directly. This will allow closure of both the current Hitchin & Letchworth Museums & Gallery buildings, with the operating budgets transferred to the operation of this site. This negates the requirement to invest significantly into the these two public buildings to meet DDA requirements, and building fabric renewal.

The conversion of the upper floors within the Workman's Hall part of the building to provide education and staff accommodation for all of the service staff adds further to the service development and cost saving opportunities of this proposal.

HTH provides a good town centre location for new museums and gallery provision as proposed by the FSR, and a feasibility study has shown that it can offer the required museums space whilst at the same time retaining much of the existing community usage of the Town Hall.

The two most frequently public hired spaces at the Hall are proposed for retention and enhancement. Namely the Lucas Room on the first floor, with its access significantly improved by the addition of a lift, and the Gymnasium. This proposal sees the gymnasium becoming a far more attractive room for hire, with work to open up the ceiling to natural lighting, improve its acoustics and add a sprung dance floor. Improved emergency exits significantly increase the numbers of people this room is then able to safely accommodate, increasing the flexibility of the space and minimising the impact on the loss of overall general use community space on this site.

The proposal includes the franchise for a café/bar operation on site. The intention is that this 40 cover operation could be franchised, with the franchisee responsible for fitting out costs in exchange for the license to operate on this site, for a length of time yet to be determined in order to recover the cost of fit out and operation.

The management of the whole HTH site will be undertaken by the museums team, allowing significant savings in front of house staff and administration whilst museums staff are present on site. The predominant Monday to Friday core working hours hire of the Lucas Room make these savings possible. However there are occasions when the hire is at the evening and weekends when front of house staff will still be required to attend. Although hire rates are higher for this period so is the cost of staffing so caution has been taken to limit the assumptions

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about the income levels generated from hire. Museum income is generated from exhibition hire, and commission from sales, although it is fairly small compared to the cost of the service overall. A review of fees and charges and increases in temporary exhibition space provide potential to increase revenue from these sources over time, to further reduce the burden on the North Herts tax payer.

The increase in museum space will allow a greater variety of temporary exhibitions. The availability of a dedicated education room will significantly increase the capacity of the service to teach in the museum including adults and pre school age children, and the new local study facility will offer an improved capacity for volunteers involvement.

### **PROPOSAL TO DEVELOP A MUSEUM & COMMUNITY VENUE AT HITCHIN TOWN HALL**

Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams-Architects (BFAWA), were employed to undertake a feasibility study to establish if plans to merge the collections of the two existing NHDC museums into this one site was feasible. They were also asked to ensure that any plans would improve access to these collections by overcoming the limitations with the current museum buildings (no access to first floor and multiple floor levels, limited public toilets and no dedicated education space on site), whilst also retaining community use on this town centre site.

They have experience of numerous museums restorations and redevelopments to improve access and re-display galleries. Their recent experience includes the award winning Stockwood Discovery Centre, Luton completed in 2008, The Rotunda, The William Smith Museum of Geology, Scarborough and the Clitheroe Castle Museum in Lancashire completed in 2009. Further details of these and other projects are available on their web site [www.bfaw.co.uk](http://www.bfaw.co.uk).

An Arts, Museums and Heritage Forum was set up following the FSR, and from this a Facilities Working Group was formed to give input to the HTH project. It includes representation from the wide variety of special interest groups representing Hitchin residents, other local Heritage and Cultural groups, and also existing hall users. Membership of the group is open to all. Three meetings of this Group have been held, which considered the Hitchin Town Hall Museums Feasibility Study produced by BFAW, and provided feedback. This alongside feedback from the staff of the service, identified a 'preferred' option which was further developed and costed. This has been used as the proposal for which this management plan has been developed. However it should be noted that the project is still at a very early stage, a formal commitment to progress and fund this project has not been made and detailed plans to allow planning consent and agreement of management arrangement have not yet been developed.

The BFAWA report has however confirmed that it would be feasible to relocate the Museums at Letchworth and Hitchin into Hitchin Town Hall, whilst at the same time allow continued provision of community use to be incorporated into the site.

The proposal on which the final feasibility were based are summarised below:

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- The museums specific space available in the plans are in excess of those already available at both existing museum sites
- In addition the ancillary space (storage, toilets, and retail and office space) are significantly increased.
- The area identified for specific community use is significant, allowing the retention of the Lucas Room and the Gymnasium for continued hire, following modernisation and improvement. This can include a sprung timber floor in the Gym, acoustic dampening at high level, the removal of column projections to improve the quality of space available, a small area for showers and changing, a new roof terrace and café.
- A dedicated education room will allow greater numbers of school children to visit the museum, and be used for informal and adult learning.

The North Hertfordshire Museums Service and Hitchin Town Hall are held in high regards by their local communities. Together they cost just under £1 million per annum to operate.

Hitchin Museum, Letchworth Museum, the Burymead museum store and Hitchin Town Hall all now require significant investment into the fabric of their buildings. With limited funds, the investment required to refurbish all four buildings and operate the services in their current format has been recognised as unsustainable. Without significant investment both services (Museums and Halls) will be unable to meet the expectations of the service users for the future.

A detailed analysis of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the current service provision is given below.

### **a) Museums**

#### **Strengths**

- Diverse service consisting of 2 Accredited museums, Education Service, Archaeology Service and Countryside Collection.
- Free admission
- Staff
  - Unique knowledge of the district
  - Professionally qualified
  - Expertise in wide range of areas
  - Committed and dedicated
  - Prepared to do 'out of hours' work
  - Work together as a team
- Support in the community and partnership working with business and groups.
- Project work in community (Homeless shelter, community archaeology, reminiscence work)
- Member of Hertfordshire Museums, East of England Regional Museums Group and strong support from Museum community.

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- Collections add to the “Vibrancy” of North Hertfordshire
  - Letchworth - art, archaeology, social history, natural history, social and industrial history.
  - Hitchin – social and industrial history, costume, pharmaceutical, art and photographic.
  - Education – loan boxes and teaching material.
  - Archaeology – local deposit for archaeological finds in North Herts.
  - Countryside – specimens, archival material and photographic record of countryside.
- Location
  - Near Town Centres
  - Museums next door to library
- Excellent changing exhibition and events programme
- Buildings of historic integrity
- Local media interest in service work
- Network of education customers make sure value of heritage pass on to youngsters
- Website.
- Commitment to life long learning.

### **Weaknesses**

- Museum buildings, historic limitations and inadequate in terms of;
  - Collection care and storage
  - Poor environmental control
  - Visitor facilities ( e.g. lack of public toilets, cafe)
  - Restrictive access for people with disabilities
  - No permanent education area at either museum which restricts numbers who can use.
  - High and increasing repair costs
- Old style displays with need for improved interpretation/interaction;
- Burymead - off site storage and office space limited and aging.
- Use of IT limited ( investment in digitalisation of records required)
- Limited opportunities to secure income so relative cost to tax payer high

### **Opportunities**

- Staff welcome the change

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- Scope for significant improvement in interpretation and development.
- External funding and sponsorship opportunities still exist to support reinvestment plans.
- Burymead – great development potential for improved collection storage, education and archaeological unit, and public open access possibilities.
- Possibility to expand audiences.
- Education service is one of the strongest in Hertfordshire on which to build, proposals to give dedicated space will greatly increase visitors numbers.
- Development of strong IT provision in museums, can help service reach more users,
- Exhibition space – development of more local art and crafts and collection displays, and temporary exhibition space which will attract more usage.
- Life long learning.
- Stronger partnerships with local societies and businesses.

### Threats

- Further reductions in revenue funding.
- Out of date displays and visitor facilities fail to attract repeat visitors, NHDC Museums appear stagnant if no investment in service is made.
- Ignorance of activities of Museum Service within NHDC and North Herts community giving perception of poor “Value for Money” for tax payers.
- Threats to condition of collection due to limited staff time and inadequate storage and work areas, if building not updated, and significant staff cuts made.
- Uncertainty about future limits service planning and exhibitions
- Other local museums have recently invested in their service making ours less appealing ( including Luton, Welwyn Hatfield, Stevenage, Hertford, and Bedford)

### b) Hitchin Town Hall

#### Strengths

- Centrally located in Hitchin with good public transport and car parking near by
- Variety of hall sizes available on site (Accommodating 40 to 500 )
- Affordable hire charges
- Presence of building considered of some importance to Hitchin street scene
- Historic building
- Held in strong regard by some members of the Hitchin community.

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- Managed facility
- Accommodates high attendance functions and events
- Adjustable sprung floor with proscenium stage

### **Weaknesses**

- Buildings, historic limitations and inadequate in terms of the aging building and its electrics and services including the balcony
  - Restrictive access for people with disabilities- on three floor levels
  - showers and changing facilities outdated.
- Limited usage
- Subsidy required to cover cost of operation
- Significant investment required in the fabric of the building.
- Uncertainty about the future limits bookings
- Conflict of hirer demands and time make full utilisation of resources unlikely.
- High and increasing level of vandalism and break ins
- Ageing building with high maintenance costs
- Not up to modern usage / design expectations for a community building
- Not environmentally efficient
- Minimal on site parking

### **Opportunities**

- Town relatively large and it also attracts visitors from many adjacent villages and towns.
- Growth of local population expected
- NHDC expressed willingness to consider alternative methods of operating facility
- Opportunities to attract external funding for building investment.
- Number of residents willing to offer their support.
- Stronger partnerships with local societies and businesses.
- Significant operational growth / diversity potential
  - Arts Cinema
  - Café
  - Wedding Ceremonies
  - Plays / Productions / Concerts
- Could play a significant part in plans to regenerate Hitchin Town Centre

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### Threats

- Need to reduce discretionary spend.
- Out of date visitor facilities, will drive up net costs as usage falls giving poorer VFM.
- Many other halls and venues exist and are meeting demands of customer much better.
- Community resistance to change
- Reducing external funding opportunities
- Need to retain community events limits income potential

### EXISTING MUSEUM ACCOMMODATION AND PROPOSED USE OF SPACE AT HITCHIN TOWN HALL

The existing museums at Hitchin and Letchworth house a number of different types of accommodation. For the purposes of this feasibility study these have been separated into the following room types:

- Exhibition – display of artefacts (generally in cases)
- Gallery – display of artwork (generally two-dimensionally)
- Temporary exhibition – for the short term display (gallery or exhibition)

Following analysis of the existing accommodation, the following schedule was produced to provide a comparison with the differing options to be considered.

The Exhibition/Gallery and Temporary exhibition/Flexible use space show a 12.5% increase over the existing provision. However the five fold increase in Community use space also includes significant space to be used for museum service such as the Education Suite and Local History Study centre.



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USE	Existing Musuems Area (m2)	Preferred Option at HTH Area (m2)
Retail	32	123
Perm. exhibition/ Gallery	430	506*
Temporary exhibition/ Flexible Use	128	149*
Community Use (inc Education)	78	399
Offices	60	148
Storage	60	158
Toilets	20	44
Circulation	n/a	287
Roof Terrace & Garden	n/a	128
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>1942</b>

\* Adjusted to reflect 3 small galleries (98 sq. m.) will be used as temporary exhibition space

**EXISTING HALL ACCOMMODATION AND PROPOSED USE OF SPACE AT HITCHIN TOWN HALL**

Whilst there is no wish to displace any groups, it is clear that some displacement would occur if a museum was created by conversion of the main hall into a museum. This will effectively remove the main hall from general hire. Therefore events of a scale too large to be relocated into the Gym or events which utilise the space of the whole of the building will be impossible to house in their existing format.

Table 1 below show the regular hirer hours for each of the primary rooms of Hitchin Town Hall, and seeks to set out the impact of the proposal on current users.-

Table 1: Summary Weekly Regular Hired Hours Hitchin Town Hall – Jan 10

	Current usage in hours			Retained usage in hours		
	Main Hall	Lucas Room	Gym	Main Hall ( in Gym)	Lucas Room	Gym
<b>Monday</b>	0	2	5		2	5
<b>Tuesday</b>	3	5.5	3.5	* 3	5.5	3.5
<b>Wednesday</b>	4	3	1.5		3	1.5
<b>Thursday</b>	4	5	3	*4	5	3
<b>Friday</b>	Monthly Hire ~	2	2		2	2
<b>Saturday</b>	0	2	0	0	2	0
<b>Total</b>	11	19.5	15	7	19.5	15

~ Last Friday of every month c.1.5 hours per week not included in total

\* Timing of events does not clash with Gym and group sizes suggest groups can be accommodated in that room subject to agreement with the groups.

**Note:** This data excludes current casual use.

Of the total weekly regular 45.5 hours of hire, 34.5 hours- 75% can be accommodated in the same spaces ( Gym & Lucas Room). A further 7 hours of activity may also be accommodated in the smaller gymnasium space ( approximately 2/3 of main hall space) if the groups felt this appropriate, making

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it possible to retain in the region of 90% of the regular usage. ( Similar analysis based on June 2010 regular hire shows an increase in total hours use to 53 hours 45 mins, 38 hours in the Gym & Lucas room combined.

The feasibility study has allowed discussion relating to the proposed retention of community use spaces/rooms to be tested with the current regular users.

The meeting with regular hirers show regular users of the Gym, St Johns and Lucas Rooms are generally very supportive of the NHDC proposals to invest on this site, and see benefits for their groups. The users of the whole facility and hall are naturally more concerned about the impact on their groups.

The regular hirers affected by the proposals to remove the main hall from hire are:-

- Line Dancing 2 times 3 hrs on a Tuesday. For one of these sessions the Gym is currently used for the second session it is already occupied.
- Rodney School of Dance 4 hrs Wednesday evening. This clashes with Majorettes and Fencing in the Gym. The Hirer has also expressed his concern about the suitability of the Gym for the scale of operation he wants to operate from Hitchin Town Hall. In addition he is referring specifically to the large dancing displays which are operated as infrequent events so not shown in the above figures. The hirer currently uses a variety of premises spread throughout the district.
- Tea Dancers -50+ group Thursday. This time is currently free in the Gym
- Zamba group is set to start in Sept 2010. The gym is already in occupation at the time this is being held.

In addition many of the users of the whole building are casual hirers of the hall. With the future of the hall uncertain since 2006, hire of the hall has only been confirmed on an annual basis, April to March. However given the nature of some of the casual hirers, e.g. weddings, where planning of these events can be undertaken more than 12 months in advance, it is likely that this practise has been restricting take up of hire in the hall.

Usage of the town hall building overall however has been fairly consistent running at around one quarter of its capacity over the last two years ( 9am – 9pm).

Table 2: Hitchin Town Hall Overall Utilisation Figures

Year	Hire Hours	Overall Average Facility Utilisation	No of Hire Bookings	
			Regular	Event
<b><u>2007/08</u></b>	4632.0	26.5%	No figs	No figs
<b><u>2008/09</u></b>	3666.4	21.0%	837	116
<b><u>2009/10</u></b>	3959.0	22.7%	867	194

In January 2008 a Hitchin Town Hall Footfall Report was produced listing weekly footfall by hirer for the whole of 2007 to assist with an external funding bid. This provided the following information on usage of Hitchin Town Hall over this period, to help us understand the potential impact on users of this facility.

- Total annual footfall was estimated as 59,387 over the year
- 30 bookings were attended by in excess of 200 people.
- The majority of these were private parties and weddings, which are considered to be commercial hires. The remainder were:
  - A National Child Birth Trust event
  - A Beer Festival
  - A Blood donor session
  - A Spiritualist event
  - A Schools concert
  - Rhythms of the World events

Some hirers use a combination of rooms and the main hall for large scale less frequent events such as the monthly Celiidhs (see table 1), including the cloakroom and bar. The preferred plans for this site do include the provision of café and kitchen facilities to support similar community usage of the Gym albeit with smaller capacity. The St Johns Ambulance service use a specific room in Hitchin Town Hall for 1.5

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hours a week. In the preferred option this space is designated office space but a space equal in size on the floor below has been nominated as an education room and could, subject to agreement, serve both uses.

There are a number of alternative venues in Hitchin where larger scale events are currently possible.

As part of the investigation into the future use of Hitchin Town Hall, a desk top analysis was undertaken to establish the extent, usage and nature of all the community facilities (35 in total) within Hitchin (3000m radius of the Hitchin Town Hall). This work was reported to Cabinet at its 26 June 2007 meeting, key findings included:-

- The analysis identified a range of different community buildings within Hitchin urban area and that there is surplus capacity at these other venues, i.e. That these also were not operating at full capacity. This suggests that there is an over capacity of general community provision for hire, and that some rationalisation could take place.
- There is strong community expectation and aspirations that the Town Hall should continue to be used for general community purposes, as it is the only building of its type in the town.
- Usage of the Town Hall in core times at between 34%-41% of capacity, with a broad split between 70% community and 30% private/commercial.
- It is likely that some activities currently taking place at Hitchin Town Hall could not be relocated elsewhere in North Herts.

This current Feasibility Study shows it will be possible to retain a large majority of the existing groups who use the Town Hall on a regular basis. However, this proposal does not allow the required use of the building for a museum and also allow full retention of the main hall, which, although it has some regular usage, is predominantly used at the weekend for events.

However, the Preferred Option retains the Gym/Workman's hall roughly 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the size of the main hall, with café and kitchen facilities. In addition, with the significantly enhanced quality of the space available following the proposed investment at Hitchin Town Hall it would be reasonable to assume an increase in interest in using the community space on this site. There is also some potential for suitable events to be operated within the areas of the building designated for museum usage.

### **Community Space- Room Capacity**

The current stated room capacities are derived from the Premises Licences where applicable. Where these licences do not exist, the numbers have been taken from historical figures used by the previous NHDC Hall Manager.

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	<u>Seated</u>	<u>Standing</u>
Gym	200	not specified
Bar	25	not specified
Main Hall	250	500
Lucas Room	40	not specified

The proposals for this site allow a review of the arrangements for emergency evacuation of the rooms and overall building capacity. By increasing the number and size of emergency exits in line with the latest Building Regulations it is possible to maximise the capacity of the newly refurbished Gym/ Community hall. It would be possible to increase capacity to 400 standing based on 214 sqm space and 2 exits from this room of 2 metre wide. This is based upon the general assembly occupancy factor of 0.5, but will need confirmation at detailed planning stage.

### Existing Community Use

Across the buildings there are a number of community uses which are accommodated. Some of these have been established for generations, and are part of the rich and diverse activities offered within North Hertfordshire District Council's premises. Whilst there is no wish to displace any groups, it is a clear and strategic decision to refurbish the Town Hall complex with museum use at the heart of the refurbishment. To achieve this it is recognised by the Council that some of the activities undertaken at the Town Hall must be accommodated elsewhere to facilitate the museum use and there is a willingness to assist with this process.

The options to be considered identify differing schemes which retain differing spaces which may retain a number of these community uses. In order to consider options, this report looks at the identification of differing spaces to be retained for community use, rather than the retention of the uses themselves. It should be noted that some of the spaces will lend themselves to new community use as well as existing uses.

The main current spaces which house community use have been identified as:

- ☐ Main Hall [280m<sup>2</sup>]
- ☐ Gymnasium [214m<sup>2</sup>]
- ☐ 'Lucas' room (meeting room) [ 53m<sup>2</sup>]
- ☐ 'St John's' room [ 73m<sup>2</sup>]
- ☐ Education rooms (within museums) [ 78m<sup>2</sup>]

Analysis of the room use has found that the Town Hall is underused generally, with the Main Hall used for approximately 50% of the available time; and the least used space being the St John's room which is used for 1½ hrs per week. In addition, the size of the gymnasium is restricted and is far smaller than the size recommended for most indoor sporting activities. It is best suited for fitness and martial arts classes at a recreational level due to severe restrictions both in floor area and ceiling height.

#### **4. MAJOR REPAIRS & UPGRADE**

- The plans introduce a lift to allow first floor access and all of the first floor is brought together on to one floor level.
- All the Museums staff can be accommodated on this site allowing further efficiencies to be achieved in the re-provision of the Museums Service Storage project.
- Conversion of the Hitchin Town Hall can be undertaken with minimum intervention into the existing building overall, and the new structure designed to cause minimum damage to the existing building.
- Significant work and investment is planned on Electrical and Mechanical systems on the site to ensure compliance with regulations relating to energy conservation, and support the required usage of the building.
- Health & safety risk relating to the proposed project have been identified and some suggestions for mitigation have been indicated. Further work in this area will be required as the project progresses.
- Total cost ( Excl Vat) of this project is said to be £3.4M, of which £1.03M relates to fit out costs.

The building is a good size and location for a museum to be developed. The building is generally sound in condition and able to be adapted for this use.

The feasibility report on this site identifies an appropriate spatial arrangement which will create an exciting new museum facility, whilst consolidating existing provision into one venue. This scheme also maintains a valued community provision.

An overall construction cost of £2,408,465 and a fit-out budget of £1,033,373 (inc. professional fees) give an overall expected out-turn cost of £3,441,838(excl. VAT).

This shows that the overall concept of a museum on the Hitchin Town Hall site is both physically and economically feasible.

An inspection of the building was carried out by Neal Charlton of Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams - Architects, and Jane Hogg of Thomasons structural engineers on Thursday 6th August 2009. This comprised a visual inspection of the building from accessible rooms and at ground

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level externally. The building's physical condition was noted as well as overall defects which inhibit public use, such as lack of accessibility and poor fire strategy.

The conclusion of this inspection was that the building is generally sound and suitable for adaptation and reuse. The following defects were noted:

- ☐ Lack of accessible entrance
- ☐ Lack of vertical access (lift etc)
- ☐ Dampness to basement areas – particularly the stage
- ☐ Numerous small level changes throughout the building
- ☐ Poor drainage
- ☐ Minor defects noted to Workman's Hall roof
- ☐ Poor decorative condition throughout the building

## SUITABILITY FOR MUSEUM USE

### Location

The position of Hitchin Town Hall within the town centre allows the building to be easily accessed using the town's connections to the public transport network and road links. Considering the proximity of town centre facilities, the adjacent multi-storey car park negates the need for car parking upon the site.

There is however a need to consider groups who would visit the site if used as a museum. School parties and organised groups often arrive at museums on coaches. These need to drop off groups in close proximity to the museum entrance.

### Internal Circulation

The internal circulation of the building is not suitable at present for public use, with many level changes and complex fire separation arrangements. In addition there is the need to simplify the circulation in the museum exhibit areas.

Detailed analysis of the building led initially to four differing arrangements for the introduction of new, enhanced vertical circulation within the buildings. These led ultimately to the proposal incorporated into this preferred option, which sees the introduction of a new lift within the central bar area (linked to a new corridor at first floor level).



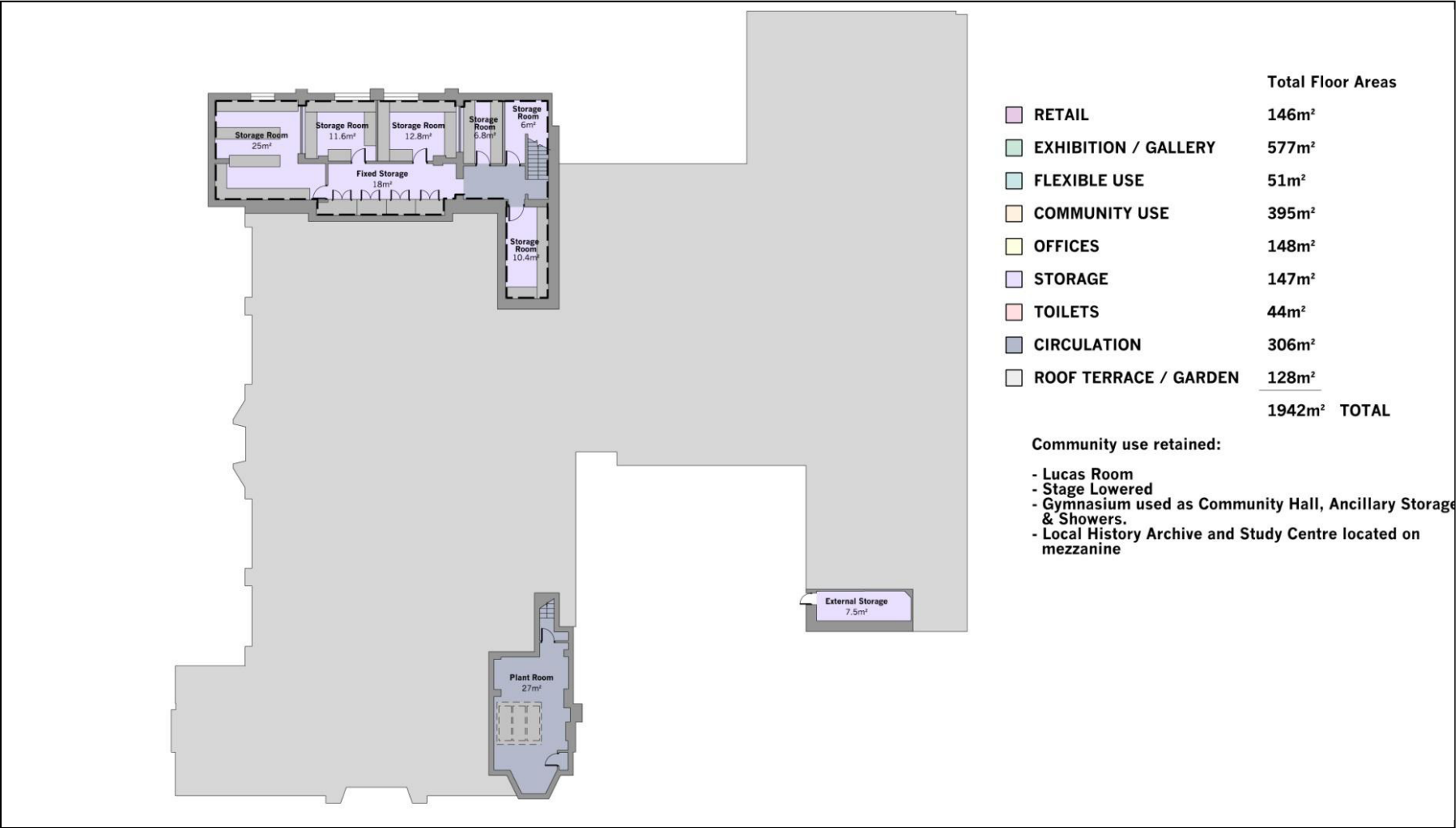
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## Proposal

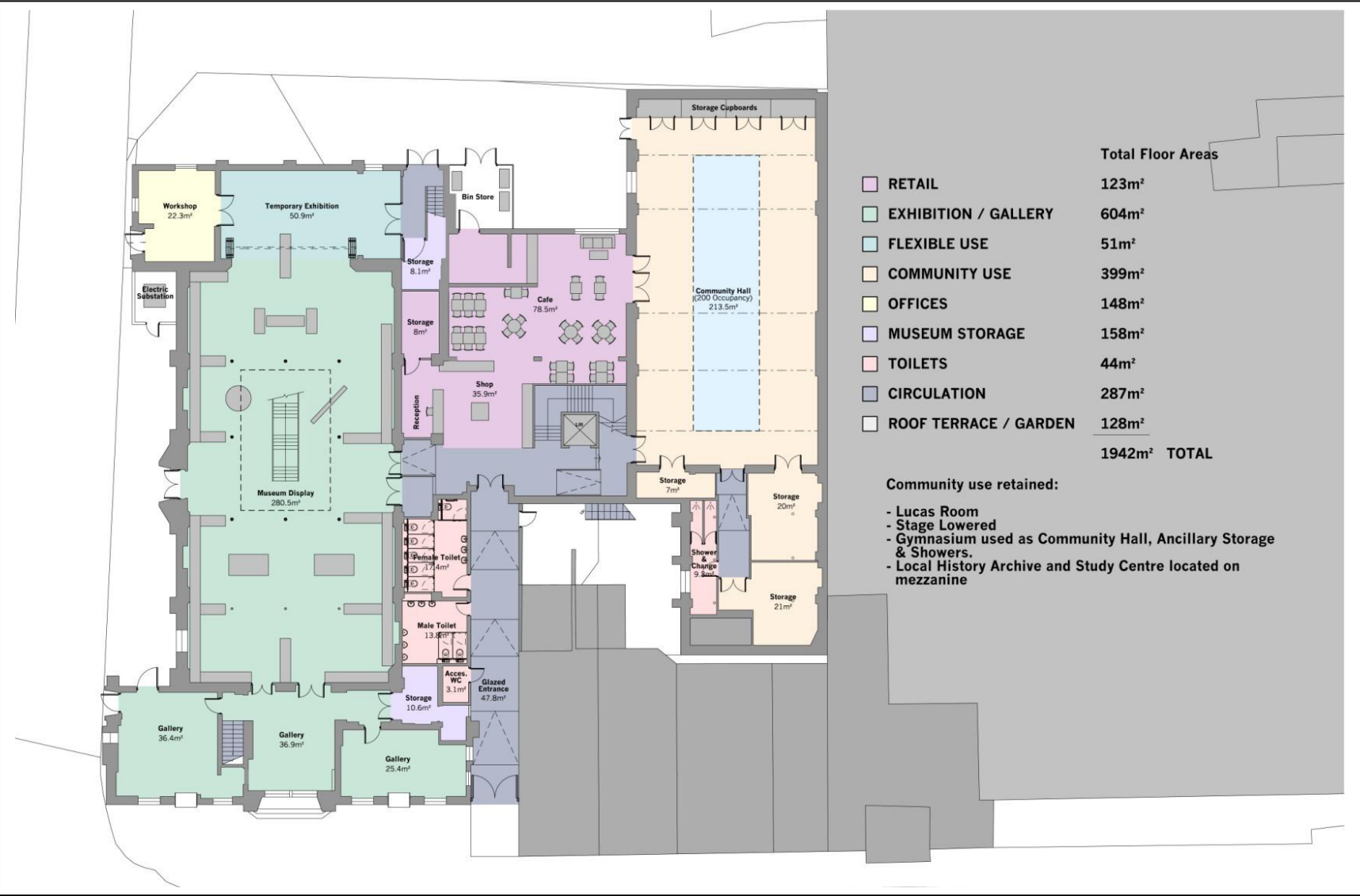
The layout of the scheme identified as best-fitting the brief uses the side entrance with a glazed access to the centre of the building. This allows visitors to easily access either the Museum or the Community Hall.



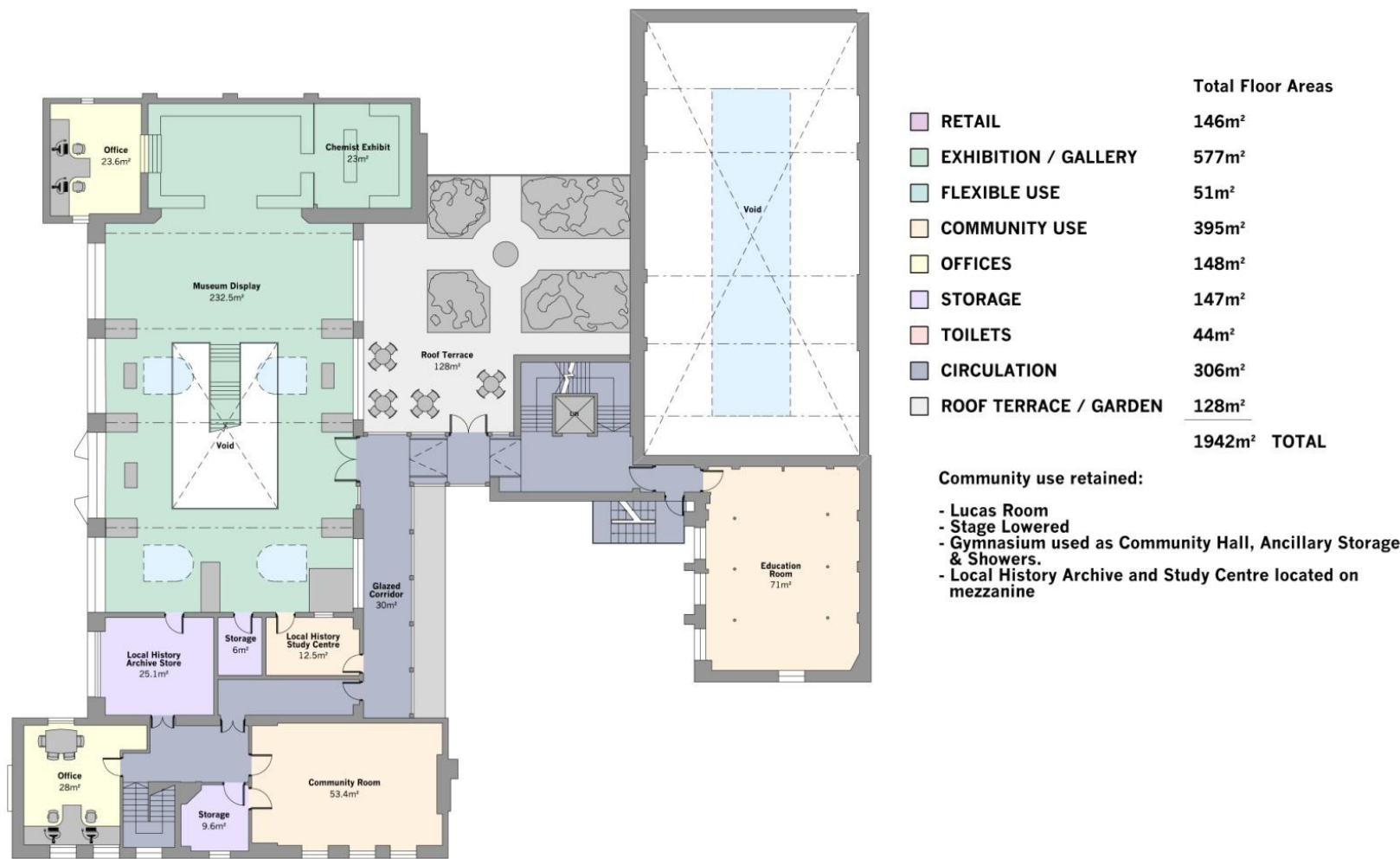
**External Concept Sketch -Gym Retained Scheme**



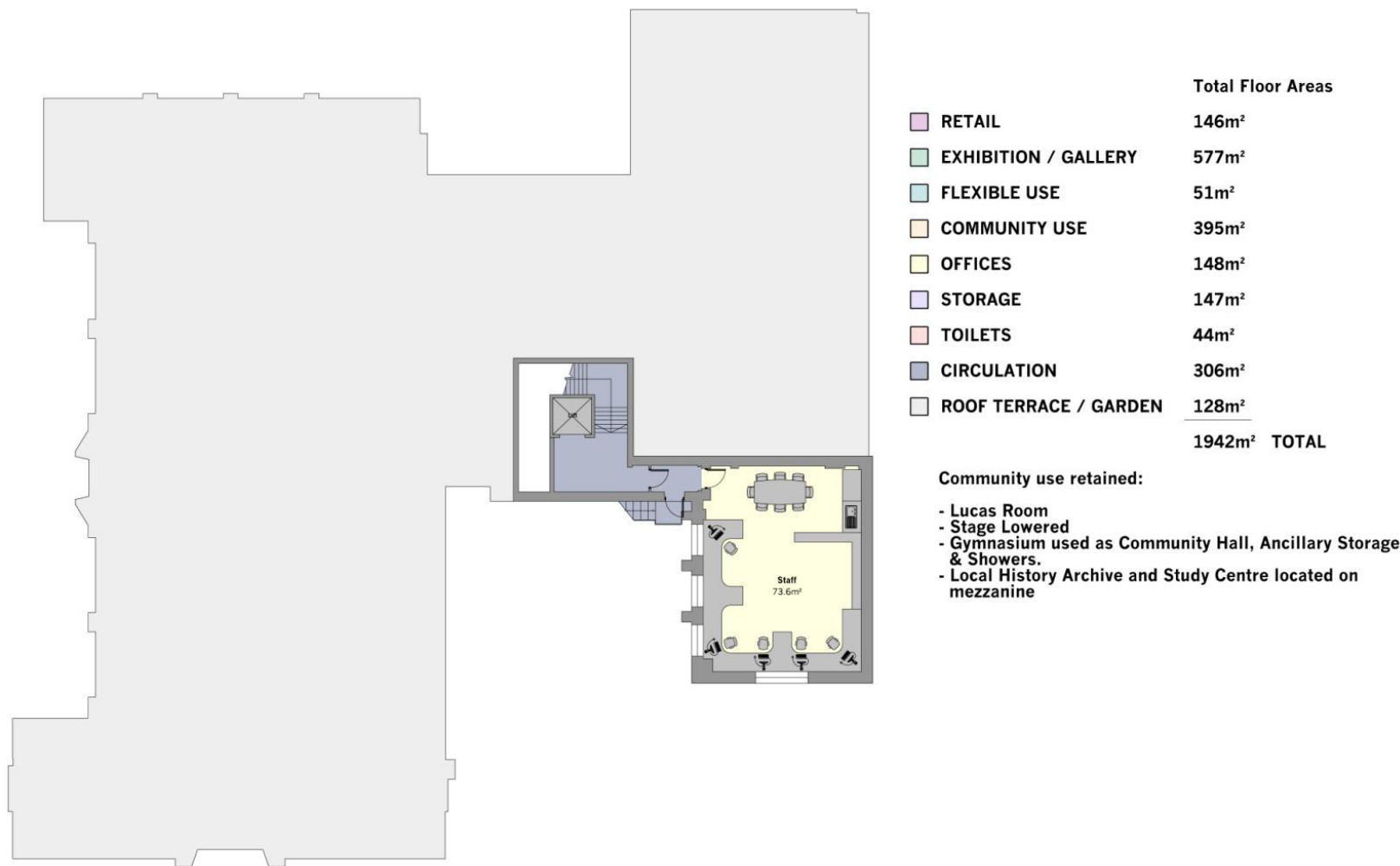
Basement Plan –Gym Retained Scheme



Ground Floor Plan –Gym Retained Scheme



First Floor Plan –Gym Retained Scheme



Second Floor Plan –Gym Retained Scheme

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This proposal utilises the main hall as a museum display area, with a mezzanine added to provide a large second floor. The stage is lowered to floor level and the mezzanine extended into the volume of the stage. This provides additional display area within a windowless environment – ideal for a number of light sensitive displays.

Community use is retained in a number of ways.

- The gymnasium is refurbished as a Community Hall.
- The Lucas Room is retained as a meeting room.
- A local history studies centre will be established on the new mezzanine.
- A large education room will be established which will allow activities for school parties of all ages.
- Temporary exhibitions area, located on the stage, will accommodate differing types of local exhibits.

The Community Hall will have the suspended ceiling removed and the roof light reinstated. The floor would be relaid with a sprung timber floor and the walls clad to provide flush walls, removing the column projections, and allowing the introduction of acoustic dampening at high level. This would allow the hall to be used for a large range of community uses, from use by community groups to recreational activities.

The hall will have large doors opening into the adjoining cafe. This will allow refreshments to be served to functions within the community hall. The cafe will accommodate 40 covers, a viable number for such a business, allowing the cafe to be let as a franchise if desired. Access to the cafe will be by the new entrance from the covered street access.

This will allow direct access to the cafe from the main entrance. Storage is provided by using the existing gym store. This is reinforced by the provision of full length storage at the far end of the hall and new access to stores directly from the hall. A small area for showers and changing is also provided.

Upon arrival within the building visitors are greeted at the shop. This point will provide orientation allowing visitors to branch off to differing areas of the building. At this point the main vertical circulation is provided by a new lift and stair creating access for all to every floor level.

At the front of the building an area for gallery display is located in the existing entrance lobby. This could utilise the entrance as a large window into the central gallery area.

New toilet provision will be created on the new entrance 'street'. This will be of adequate size to allow for the differing uses of the building, being sized to accommodate either school parties or events with a reception serving alcohol if required.

The first floor of the building will be brought together as one floor plate by the introduction of a glazed link, joining the new mezzanine of the

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Main Hall with the lift and stair core and education room, situated in the Workman's Hall (where the changing rooms are currently housed). Another element at first floor level is the introduction of a roof garden and external terrace, over what is now the kitchen. This would allow the relocation of the physic garden from outside Hitchin Museum if the current museum site was disposed of.

The provision of a local history study centre is accommodated on the first floor mezzanine to the main hall. This, combined with the adjacent local history storage facilities provides better public access to this important element of the museum collection. Another important element is the creation of a dedicated education room. This is situated within the workman's hall, directly below the staff accommodation, allowing access to the galleries via the glazed link or to the community hall below for other activities. This will allow a wide ranging educational programme to be developed.

Staff offices from the three sites of Letchworth and Hitchin Museums, as well as the Museums Service Store on Burymead Road will be amalgamated into the new provision at Hitchin Town Hall. This separates the activities of storage from curatorial offices and allows the team to be sited in a central location closer to the visitors and room users. This is a bold and modern approach to museum management. There is a range of staff provision spread throughout the site, but the overarching aim of accommodating all staff on one site is achieved. Staff accommodation is as follows:

### **Ground Floor**

Technicians workshop 22.3m<sup>2</sup>  
Reception desk

### **First Floor**

Double office 23.6m<sup>2</sup>  
Large double office 28.0m<sup>2</sup>

### **Second Floor**

Large shared office 73.6m<sup>2</sup> (for up to 6 staff and kitchenette)

## **Design Philosophy**

The structural works have been designed wherever possible to cause minimum intervention to the existing buildings. With the exception of the new stairwell and re-roofing to form the roof garden the works would be reversible in that the new structure could be removed and the original structure be reinstated.

The support to the new structure has been designed to cause minimum damage to the building which may, at times, not result in the most



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obvious structural arrangement.

### **Main Hall**

#### **Ground Floor**

The existing sprung timber floor will be carefully taken up with the timber being stored for re-use. The current method of support of the floor will be studied and recorded during the dismantling operation. After completion of the mezzanine structure the timber floor will be re-laid (not sprung) using original timber planks with the necessary support structure introduced beneath.

#### **Mezzanine Floor**

The mezzanine will be formed using a steel frame with a composite concrete floor. The existing balcony columns will be replaced and a total of eleven new circular columns will be positioned within the hall area to support the new floor. Around the perimeter of the hall steel members will be fixed to the masonry such that, whilst holes will have been drilled and a few padstones may have been inserted, there will not have been significant removal of any of the existing masonry. Two further columns may be required, tucked into corners of the existing detailing in order to complete the support for the floor.

The new columns will be supported on concrete pad foundations (providing the ground conditions are found to be satisfactory

#### **Existing Balcony**

The existing timber balcony at the rear of the hall is of a sloping construction such that reconfiguration of this to provide a level floor at the required level would not be a viable structural option. It will therefore be taken down in its entirety.

#### **Stage Area**

The existing stage, which is higher than the floor of the main hall, will be taken up and replaced with a new floor at the same level as the main hall. The new floor will be steel framed with a composite concrete deck.

Two new columns will be required but the remainder will be supported on steel beams either built into, or bolted to, the masonry walls.

#### **Walkway and Glazed Corridor**

The new walkway that will link the Community Hall with the Mezzanine area will be steel framed with glass walls. The structure, of tubular steel sections will be fully visible in the walls. The deck of the walkway will be of a composite concrete construction.

The walkway will span from the wall of the existing stairwell across to the wall of the hall and will enter by the existing window opening. This arrangement, incorporating short ramps within the link, will avoid the necessity to provide any additional supports puncturing the building.



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The use of the window opening will mean that little work will be required to provide access into the hall building.

At present the capacity of the hall wall has not been determined to confirm its adequacy to support the end of the walkway. Appropriate investigations will be undertaken as the scheme progresses. At that time a decision would be made to determine whether the masonry is adequate, requires strengthening or whether new columns may be needed to be introduced. The determining factor will be to cause minimum reversible alteration to the existing building.

The glazed wall of the proposed corridor will be supported on steel beams introduced at high level within the toilets (where walls are being removed). The beams will be supported on piers of the existing masonry that will be left in position. The lower level pitched slate roof will remain in place and also be supported on the new beams.

### **Stairwell and Lift Shaft**

The stairwell, up to first floor level, will be of 225mm masonry and will provide support for the link corridor and new roof garden beams.

The lift shaft will also be formed using 225mm masonry. It will incorporate a pit, excavated into the ground, to the depth required (probably 1.4m) for the selected lift. The base of the pit will be formed using a 200mm concrete slab. The lift shaft will extend approximately 4m above the third floor landing and will incorporate a lifting beam for maintenance of the lift.

### **Roof Garden**

The roof garden will be formed above the existing kitchen and bar areas.

This will be area of greatest structural intervention. The existing roof will be stripped off and the rear wall of the kitchen may be rebuilt – the necessity for this will be determined when intrusive investigations are undertaken to prove the construction and foundations of the existing wall. The wall between the bar and the kitchen may need to be strengthened and underpinned, again this will be determined by intrusive investigations.

A new pre-cast concrete roof will be constructed over this area with sufficient capacity to carry a roof garden and seating area. In order to minimise intrusion into the main hall building, steel beams will be introduced such that the pre-cast units span parallel to the wall of the hall.

## **Services requirements**

### **Electrical Services**

Given the proposed level of intervention and the apparent age and condition of the existing electrical services installations it is proposed that the building will be completely rewired and if deemed necessary provided with a new upgraded incoming electricity supply to accommodate possible additional loads associated with the proposed use.

### **Life Safety Systems**

Life protection systems will be provided in the form of automatic fire alarm and detection systems to provide earliest possible warning and alarm of a fire situation and emergency lighting systems to aid safe evacuation in the event of power outages within the building.

### **Building Security Systems**

Passive building security measures will be enhanced with active security systems in the form of automatic intruder detection provided throughout the building linked to a remote monitoring station plus closed circuit television system (CCTV) provided to monitor selected points of entry, circulation and gallery spaces. Panic alarms will be provided to be considered as part of staff protection and security measures.

### **Internal Lighting Installation.**

The building will be provided with a complete new artificial lighting installation utilising low energy, high frequency luminaries best suited and selected to compliment the form, decor and use of each space.

Energy saving will be promoted through the use of presence detection control and daylight linking to reduce light levels internally when day lighting sufficiently illuminates selected internal spaces. New low energy lamp technologies such as LEDs will be considered for use as part of the lighting design strategy.

### **External Lighting Installation**

The building will be provided with external lighting installations to permit safe entry and egress whilst enhancing the Architectural features of the building and promoting its prominence and use.

### **Small Power & Data Installations**

The building will be provided with a new small power and data installation designed to adequately accommodate the mixed use proposals and provide the latest data connectivity solutions.

### **Passenger Lift**

A machine room-less traction passenger lift will be installed to provide vertical transportation to all upper floor levels (excluding the basement) the lift will be in full compliance with part M of the building regulations.

## **Systems**

### **Heating and cooling**

Generally heating will be via high efficiency condensing boiler feeding perimeter radiators throughout. All radiators will have thermostatic control. The ground floor gallery areas have high efficiency air sourced heat pumps providing heating and cooling to off -set high heat gains.

### **Ventilation**

An air handling unit will serve the café and kitchen area with filtered fresh air, with extract air being from the kitchen canopy. The ground floor gallery will have a dedicated supply air handling unit supplying heated only fresh air to suit the occupancy profiles of the space. The design intention is to develop natural ventilation strategies throughout to minimise energy consumption whilst ensuring ventilation and avoid excessive overheating. This will be via perimeter openings at low level with high level openings on the floor above, intended to be within the roof in the public spaces. These will also be used for natural daylight.

The system will be automated based on control of temperature and CO2. Perimeter offices / cellular spaces will have manual opening windows. Where ventilation cannot be achieved via passive means local heat recovery ventilation units will be provided.

The community hall area will have a series of roof mounted roof lights that will also provide natural daylight. These again will be controlled on the same function.

Local toilet extract systems will be provided.

### **Domestic cold services**

A new Boosted cold water system will be provided to all outlets from a cold water storage tank. This will ensure a guaranteed pressure at all outlets.

### **Domestic hot water services**

A new gas fired hot water system will be provided. A system for the kitchen area and then a separate system from the wash hand basins and other such outlets. This will ensure only the required amount of hot water is provided as required as the peak demand could be low. Further clarification of the function of the food preparation in the kitchen would confirm.

### **Gas**

Gas piped services will be amend and re-distributed to suit the new kitchen and the new boiler and hot water heater.

### **Disposal soil and waste**

A new soil and waste system will be provided, all above ground. The below ground connections required will be by others. It is assumed any grease filtration / traps will be by a specialist via the kitchen end user.

New sanitaryware is within the M&E cost plan however deemed to be specified to the architects requirements.

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### Controls

There will be a new building management control system provided for effective operation of the mechanical services.

### Costs Plan

Construction Cost (as Cost Report)		£2,220,602
Inflation/Deflation (to 2Q 2011)	-1.40%	-£31, 088
Anticipated Construction Cost		£2,189,513
Fees and Surveys	10%	£218,951
Construction Sub-Total		£2,408,465
Exhibition Fit-Out (inc. fees)		£983,373
General Fit-Out		£50,000
Fit-Out Sub-Total		£1,033,373
<b>Total Cost (excl. VAT)</b>		<b><u>£3,441,838</u></b>

Costs were developed in association with Quantity Surveyors Appleyard and Trew, who were commissioned to provide high level cost advice on design proposals prepared by Buttress Fuller Alsop Williams ( BFAW).

Through the BFAW team's experience of museum design we are confident that these costs are robust.

Collectively they have a proven track record of museum project delivery on time and on budget.

Feasibility costs are provided for the preferred option and for the purpose of this report it was assumed that construction works would commence in November 2010 with a construction period of 52 weeks.

### EXCLUSIONS

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Allowances have been made within the overall 'out-turn' costs for items outside the construction costs however the following items are excluded

- a) Value Added Tax
- b) Asbestos removal
- c) Legal Fees
- d) Kitchen/Café Fittings
- e) Community Use Furniture
- f) Loose Furniture & Fittings
- g) Decanting Costs
- h) Conservation of Collections Costs

Construction costs are based on approximate quantities utilising current rates.

It is assumed that competitive tenders will be obtained for the proposed construction works using standard contract conditions and a single stage traditional procurement route.

Inflation/deflation has been applied to current costs up to the mid-point of the anticipated construction period, i.e. 2Q 2011; based on the BCIS 'all-in Tender Price Indices'

Within the 'out-turn' costs Professional Fees have been applied at 10% and within the 'construction' costs a Contingency has been applied at 7.5%.

Allowances totalling £50,000 have been included for General Fit-out (refer to breakdown).

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## Gym as Community Hall -Recreation Concept Sketch



## Gym as Community Hall -Event Concept Sketch

### 5. ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

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Hitchin Town Hall is a significant civic monument in the Hitchin Town Centre Conservation Area and makes an important contribution to it. This proposal seeks to treat its historic fabric with appropriate respect, ensuring historic features and fittings are preserved where practical and the design philosophy and approach adopted to date has included this at its heart.

The Town Hall is set back from the main building frontage in Brand Street and as a result 'hidden' when viewed from the Town Centre. This proposal includes a new entrance and some front of building treatments to its new entrance to try and rectify this, however given the historic nature of the building and its location this will be sensitively managed.

Although there is only limited on street parking which will be designated for disabled users, the site is well served by public transport and has a number of convenient public car parks near at hand.

The delivery of this project in a timely manner is reliant on key dates being achieved. Initially the Feasibility Plan identified that the new facility could open to the public in April 2012. This is as shown in the timing plan below, based on a decision expected in December 2009.

	2009	2010												2011													2012				
	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr		
Decision to proceed																															
Appointment of Design Team																															
Design development and planning application																															
Working drawings completed																															
Tender documents produced																															
OJEU notice for main contract works																															
Evaluation of expressions of interest																															
Tender main contract																															
Main contract works																															
Exhibition fit-out																															
Final fit-out and object installation																															
Public Opening																															

## Heritage Building Listing

English Heritage (EH) have advised that they have received an application to list Hitchin Town Hall under the Planning ( Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest.

Letchworth Town Hall has recently been listed despite the EH advice two years ago was that it was not of sufficient merit. Our Officers have discussed this with one of the EH officers who advises that greater consideration is being given to the merits and interests of town halls as important civic buildings for any historic settlement. Given that the resulting changing approaches to listing town halls, it would seem reasonable that this new emphasis will also influence the decision for Hitchin Town Hall.

If the Secretary of State does decide to list Hitchin Town Hall, any proposal for re- development will require the Secretary of States consent.

## **6. GOVERNANCE, LEADERSHIP**

### **Ownership**

Whilst the town hall itself is in the ownership of North Hertfordshire District Council, the Workman's Hall and Gymnasium are under the guardianship of the Hitchin Town Hall Workman's and Gymnasium Trust.

### **Trust**

Under the terms of the conveyance (which passed the gymnasium within the Hitchin Town Hall to the former Hitchin UDC) it states that any future use of the gymnasium must be for use as a gym *or for other purposes mentioned in s6(3) Museums and Gymnasiums Act 1891* and also for any other (charitable) purpose for the benefit of the North Herts District. The Museums and Gymnasiums Act 1891 has been replaced by the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Broadly, there are powers in these two Acts for local authorities to provide recreational facilities, museums and art galleries. The trusts relating to Hitchin Town Hall are therefore ideally suited for its use as a museum, but this would still be subject to consideration by the Cabinet Sub-Committee (Hitchin Town Hall Trust). The Council is the Trustee, however the Cabinet Sub-Committee has been constituted to act on behalf of the Council to consider all matters in connection with the future use, operation and management of the Trust property. Its role is to act exclusively in the best interests of the Trust.

Currently work is being undertaken to register the Trust's interest in the property within Hitchin Town Hall with the Land Registry and to re-register the Trust with the Charity Commission.

In order to do this the site management of the Property must be segregated between the Trust and the Council, including in terms of income and expenditure. For the current management arrangements for this site to be formalised (to continue to be used as a single site) the consent



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of the Charity Commission will be required. The absence of formal arrangements for the management of this site were identified during discussion about possible community asset transfer. To allow any significant investment at this site the absence of this agreement needs to be resolved.

The Gymnasium and Workman's Hall are collectively known as the 'Hitchin Town Hall Workman's and Gymnasium Trust' for which the Charitable Objects are understood to be as follows:-

*"Upon trust to use or permit it to be used as a Gym for the benefit of the residents of Hitchin and for other purposes mentioned in s6(3) Museums and Gymnasiums Act 1891 and also for any other (charitable) purpose for the benefit of the North Hertfordshire District for which North Hertfordshire District Council can lawfully use building and land vested in them".*

For ease of understanding the operational areas that come under the ownership of the 'Hitchin Town Hall Workman's and Gymnasium Trust' can be broadly described (as currently identified) as follows:-

### Ground Floor

- Gymnasium
- Gymnasium Store
- Kitchen
- Bar
- External area to rear of building used for staff parking

### First Floor

- Ladies Changing Room (incorporating showers and toilet facilities)
- Gents Changing Room (incorporating showers and toilet facilities)

### Second Floor

- St. John Ambulance Training Room

Precise delineation of the area under the ownership of the 'Hitchin Town Hall Gymnasiums Trust' can be seen in APPENDIX A.

The following assumptions and exclusions have been included in the draft Management Agreement between NHDC and the Trust. However this will need to be updated should this project progress.

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### Assumptions

- Complete operational responsibility for the combined facilities will be with North Hertfordshire District Council
- All income generated by the hire of the combined facilities shall belong to North Hertfordshire District Council.
- All staff salaries and operating costs for the operation of the combined facilities shall be paid by North Hertfordshire District Council
- The areas of the building owned by the 'Hitchin Town Hall Workman's and Gymnasium Trust' will be leased to North Hertfordshire District Council
- No requirements for any financial arrangements or reconciliations, other than the payment of a peppercorn rent shall exist between the 'Hitchin Town Hall Workman's and Gymnasium Trust' and North Hertfordshire District Council

The responsibility for the operation of the building, within North Hertfordshire District Council will lie with the Strategic Director of Customer Services. This responsibility to be delegated via the Head of Service for Community and Cultural Services, to the Community Facilities Manager. Under this proposal this will be changed to the Cultural Services Manager.

## 7. FINANCIAL ASSUMPTIONS & PROJECTIONS

Currently the operation of HTH and the Museums & Heritage service costs NHDC just under £1 million per annum, inclusive of all cost including NHDC central overhead recharges. Part of this is off set by income charged to service users, but essentially the museums service provides free access to its service.

### Budgets for 2009/10

	<b>Total Museums</b>	<b>Hitchin Town Hall</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<i>Expenditure</i>			
	£	£	£
Staffing Costs	346,220	78,245	424,465
	£	£	£
Repairs & Maintenance	36,000	14,170	50,170
	£	£	£
Utilities	17,860	10,430	28,290
	£	£	£
Business Rates	32,810	13,580	46,390
	£		£
Transport costs	3,350	£ -	3,350
	£	£	£
Supplies & Services	57,860	6,910	64,770
	£	£	£
Recharges	98,410	66,910	165,320
Apportionment of Service	£	£	£
Management Overheads	107,310	43,305	150,615
	£	£	£
Total Expenditure	699,820	233,550	933,370
	-£	-£	-£
<i>Income</i>	21,520	44,110	65,630
	£	£	£
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>678,300</b>	<b>189,440</b>	<b>867,740</b>

The NHDC Financial Strategy is reviewed annually and has for a large number of years highlighted the financial pressures faced by the authority. Given the current economic climate the requirement for NHDC to make significant efficiencies savings in its revenue spend is growing.

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As early as 2005 North Hertfordshire District Council's expenditure on its discretionary Museums was targeted for reduction. An annual revenue savings target of £150,000 for the service was agreed, with much of the savings being dependant upon the move to one NHDC operated museum.

The Service & Financial Planning process (2005/06) approved the saving of the running costs of the Council managing the Hitchin Town Hall facility, £58,000 in 2007/08 and thereafter.

Financial modelling suggests that significant annual revenue savings of c.£160k per annum could be achieved by implementing either project.

Table 1: Hitchin Town Hall Museum & Community Venue proposal annual revenue estimates:

Site	Current Revenue Expenditure ( including overheads)	Projected Net Expenditure at Hitchin Town Hall if proposed scheme is progressed
Hitchin Museum	£ 192,280	£ -
Letchworth Museum	£ 224,170	£ -
Other Museum Management costs	£ 196,490	£ 196,490
Hitchin Town Hall	£ 189,440	£ 444,940
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£ 802,380</b>	<b>£ 641,430</b>

	Museums	Town Hall	Both
<i>Income</i>	-£ 21,520	-£ 44,110	-£ 65,630
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>£ 678,300</b>	<b>£ 189,440</b>	<b>£ 867,740</b>

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# Cash Flow

Hitchin Town Hall Project

## Estimated Income & Expenditure

	Year 1					Year 2					Year 3				
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual Total	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual Total	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Annual Total
<b>Income</b>															
Hall lettings	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	12,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	12,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	12,000
Museums income	1,883	1,883	1,883	1,883	7,530	1,883	1,883	1,883	1,883	7,530	1,883	1,883	1,883	1,883	7,530
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>19,530</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>19,530</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>4,883</b>	<b>19,530</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>															
Direct Staff Costs	66,886	66,886	66,886	66,886	267,544	66,886	66,886	66,886	66,886	267,544	66,886	66,886	66,886	66,886	267,544
Indirect Staff Costs	1,168	1,168	1,168	1,168	4,670	1,168	1,168	1,168	1,168	4,670	1,168	1,168	1,168	1,168	4,670
Business Rates	14,250	0	0	0	14,250	14,250	-	-	-	14,250	14,250	-	-	-	14,250
Utilities	3,023	3,023	3,023	3,023	12,090	3,023	3,023	3,023	3,023	12,090	3,023	3,023	3,023	3,023	12,090
Repairs & Maintenance	3,360	3,360	3,360	3,360	13,440	3,360	3,360	3,360	3,360	13,440	3,360	3,360	3,360	3,360	13,440
Car allowances & transport costs	1,773	1,773	1,773	1,773	7,090	1,773	1,773	1,773	1,773	7,090	1,773	1,773	1,773	1,773	7,090
Cleaning & cleaning supplies	4,175	4,175	4,175	4,175	16,700	4,175	4,175	4,175	4,175	16,700	4,175	4,175	4,175	4,175	16,700
Insurance	0	0	0	8,920	8,920	-	-	-	8,920	8,920	-	-	-	8,920	8,920
Equipment purchases & maintenance	2,423	2,423	2,423	2,423	9,690	2,423	2,423	2,423	2,423	9,690	2,423	2,423	2,423	2,423	9,690
Stationery, printing & advertising	2,390	2,390	2,390	2,390	9,560	2,390	2,390	2,390	2,390	9,560	2,390	2,390	2,390	2,390	9,560
Communications & Computing	823	823	823	823	3,290	823	823	823	823	3,290	823	823	823	823	3,290
Museums Exhibitions & Events	2,420	2,420	2,420	2,420	9,680	2,420	2,420	2,420	2,420	9,680	2,420	2,420	2,420	2,420	9,680
Subscriptions	3,390	0	0	0	3,390	3,390	-	-	-	3,390	3,390	-	-	-	3,390
Licences	750	0	0	0	750	750	-	-	-	750	750	-	-	-	750
Refuse collection	1,255	1,255	1,255	1,255	5,020	1,255	1,255	1,255	1,255	5,020	1,255	1,255	1,255	1,255	5,020
Corporate overheads	25,538	25,538	25,538	161,078	237,690	25,538	25,538	25,538	161,078	237,690	25,538	25,538	25,538	161,078	237,690
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>108,084</b>	<b>89,694</b>	<b>89,694</b>	<b>98,614</b>	<b>623,774</b>	<b>133,621</b>	<b>115,231</b>	<b>115,231</b>	<b>259,691</b>	<b>623,774</b>	<b>133,621</b>	<b>115,231</b>	<b>115,231</b>	<b>259,691</b>	<b>623,774</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>103,201</b>	<b>84,811</b>	<b>84,811</b>	<b>93,731</b>	<b>604,244</b>	<b>128,739</b>	<b>110,349</b>	<b>110,349</b>	<b>254,809</b>	<b>604,244</b>	<b>128,739</b>	<b>110,349</b>	<b>110,349</b>	<b>254,809</b>	<b>604,244</b>

### **Operational assumption made**

Because NHDC currently operates all three buildings and two services affected by this proposal it is possible to use these budgets as a starting point on which to cost the future operation of this facilities . However as the plans are still at an early stage and likely to be amended or changed prior to their implementation the following statements outline the assumptions have been made in developing the financial model for operating this facility:

### **Hall**

The following Budgets for Hitchin Town Hall have been identified as still being necessary:

Repairs, General Maintenance, Energy Costs ( Electricity and Gas), Rent & Rates, Water Services ( Water rates, Sewage charge), Fire Alarm maintenance, Energy saving equipment, Cleaning materials, Window cleaning, premises insurance, equipment purchase

### **Income**

Rooms available for hire are:

Lucas Room

Gymnasium

Income from Bar and Café – retained by 3<sup>rd</sup> party operator

2008/09 Income budget for whole building is £44,110. Current financial modelling shows retained income from Lucas Room and Gym from regular hirers of £12,000 per annum. Because of the loss of the main hall and ability to house all building events this much reduced level of income is expected.

Assuming maximum utilisation possible, 80% the maximum income possible from room hire at the current rental charges has been calculated below:-

### Gymnasium & Lucas Room hourly rate 2009/2010

Monday to Friday	£8.20	8:30am to 6pm
	£14.00	7am – 8:30am and 6pm – 11.30pm
Weekends	£14.00	8:30am to 6pm
	£18.65	7am – 8:30am and 6pm – 11.30pm

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9 hours @ £8.20 5 days a week	3 hours @£14 5 days a week
9 hours @ £14 2 days a week	3 hours 18.65 2 days a week

Estimate of maximum income potential from Lucas Room and Gymnasium hire at 80% utilisation = £39, 274 per annum.

- 52 week a year operations
- 9am to 9pm- 12 hours of operation per day
- Hire charges at standard rate ( i.e. commercial rates and charitable rates net off)

Assuming higher utilisation of the facility is achieved, the museums staff and the budgeted front of house staff could not cover all the additional hours required to have a staff member on hand during operating hours. This will require more staffing resource and so increase costs, unless charges were reviewed to recover these direct costs.

Note: The income generated from the Trust property on this site is accounted for in NHDC's overall budget for this site, whilst expenditure is also accounted for in this way. This is consistent with the proposals for the future management arrangements for the Trust's property on this site, however this has yet to be formally agreed.

### **Fees & Charges**

Although the proposals will see significant investment and improvement in the quality of the facilities available to hirers, it is recognised that many of the community groups who use Hitchin Town Hall currently will not have sufficient finances to pay significantly higher hire charges. It is therefore not proposed to significantly increase hire charges based upon the refurbishment works. We do plan to retain the current practise of differential charging for early morning, evening and weekend hire in light of the extra costs that they bring. In addition the practise of adding an extra 50% to the Standard charge (community use charge) for commercial events and a reduction of 25% for registered charities is likely to continue. The development of a Halls Strategy will however require the charges to be reviewed to ensure the correct balance between having the facility well used at minimal cost to the tax payer is achieved.

Fees and charges applicable to the hire or the building will be determined on an annual basis by North Hertfordshire District Council and published accordingly on the Council's website. There are no plans to introduce charging for general museums admissions, however there will continue to be opportunity to secure income to odd set its costs relating to exhibitions and from commission on sales of arising form these.

## Staffing

Because community bookings and therefore income is expected to be more limited than currently possible with only two of the three rooms to hire, the cost of staffing the hall at £68,000 per annum has also been reduced in this forecast. This assumes that museum's administration staff will absorb some of the work by also administrate the letting of retained rooms, and museums staff will be on site to oversee lettings during normal museum hours.

However to service the regular evening and weekend hires (none) identified in the current room hire programme a Front of House (FOH) staffing resource of 26 hours per week plus an additional 5.2 hours for 30 days for bank cover has been included in the projected costs. Realistically this assumption is not likely to be completely accurate if community usage is extended as we would like, however with extra usage will come extra income, which should be ring-fenced to cover the extra costs arising as a result. Given the staffing cost below, the hire charges at evening and weekends will need to be reviewed upwards to allow the staffing costs to be recovered for events which require double staffing. These mainly relate to the Gymnasium hire at weekends, which are entirely open for casual hire so should not disadvantage established users.

Hourly rates	FOH/ £	Agency £
core hours	10.09	11.54
	£	£
Saturdays	15.14	17.31
	£	£
Sundays	20.18	23.08

The staffing forecast is based upon the following normal working practises:-.

The Town Hall always has a least one member of NHDC staff on site when in use by the public.

For weekday evenings this is usually a FOH on their own. This is because the building will be in use by regular, and therefore, trusted hirers. However at weekends and / or for any weekday evening functions where the hirer is unknown, and / or alcohol is being consumed on site there will always be at least two NHDC staff on site throughout the event.

Museums staffing structure will be reviewed with one Assistant Curator post being lost in its entirety. This post is currently filled on a temporary basis.



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If external funding can be secured the service would like to retain on a short term, three year contract a similar sort of post to develop the museum offering, and secure additional resource to maximise the community benefit arising from this site. Without this unbudgeted post the remaining curatorial posts will have to absorb the work currently undertaken by this individual, so it will take longer for the development of the service to deliver the desired outcomes. This is not considered to be project crucial, but is a desirable post to have, if funding can be secured.

There is an opportunity for the Saturday museums staff to be reduced in number from the four which currently operate on two sites, to two . This will generate £6,200 worth of savings per annum.

### Opening Hours

The FOH hours that have been included in the budget are those required to cover the existing level and pattern of room hire for the Gym and Lucas Room. There has also been an allowance within the budget used to increase Museum staffing hours to cover Sunday afternoon opening, taking it to being open for five and a half days per week. With all Museums staff on this site there is an assumption we will be able to spread the hours staff work to cover some of the difference in day the hall operates but if the Museum was to be open to the public for more days and/or hours than those programmed there will be increased cost from Museums Visitor Assistant staffing, which has not been accounted for.

	Hitchin Town Hall	Museums
Main operating hours	9am – 9pm although open to hire until 11:30pm	10-am – 5pm
Opening days	7 days a week	5 days a week ( closed Sunday and Wednesday)
Weeks open per year	52- with limited bookings over Christmas/New Year	52 – closed Bank Holidays

### The operation of the Café/Bar

The current Feasibility plans include a facility to allow refreshments to be served to functions within the proposed community hall ( gym). The planned Café will accommodate 40 covers, a viable number for such a business, allowing the café to be let as a franchise if desired. No fit out costs for this area have therefore been included in the project on the assumption that the cost will be borne by the franchisee and this area will be cost neutral. It would however be possible to operate this facility directly and an analysis of the cost benefits of each option will be possible if this project progresses.

A meeting with Stevenage Leisure Ltd has confirmed that given their experience of a number of franchise models within the Leisure Facilities they operate that the financial assumption made by NHDC about the ability to franchise and operate such a facility at zero cost over the three year period are realistic.

**Possible savings dependant upon scale of and type of usage.**

Licensing, Refuse collection and disposal costs may be reduced given the reduced scale of operation but no cost savings have been identified currently.

**Possible areas of growth**

Rent and rates, water charges, contract cleaning and the need to retain more front of house staffing hours. It is assumed that cost related to increased usage of the facility will be covered by increased hire income. In addition selective museums budgets have been suggested for retention with regards to cleaning and security of the building to cover the higher costs relating to museums being on the town hall site.

**Museums**

The following Budgets for museums have been identified as still necessary and will transfer with the service

Salaries Gross pay, Salaries Holiday Pay, Overtime, National Insurance, Superannuation, Professional Fees, Professional; & Technical Training, personal & Management training, Criminal Records Checks, Employee Insurance premiums, Council transport, car allowances, staff car parking, travel expenses, Museums Exhibitions, Printing, Advertising, Miscellaneous Insurance premium, contract cleaning, hired vehicles, equipment purchase, repairs and maintenance Equipment, Furniture, Museums Exhibitions, Equipment leasing

Reduction in museums budgets that will arise from the service moving from its two existing museums buildings are:

Repairs, general maintenance (the HTH budgets will replace these), energy electricity and gas, rents and rates, water rates and sewerage charge, fire alarm maintenance, burglar alarm maintenance, premises insurance premium, partial external telephone savings

Burymead, Education Service, Natural History and Archaeology budgets remain unchanged as these are based at the Burymead site. However if all staff are relocated on to one site the expensive communications link will no longer be required allowing a saving of roughly £4,000 per annum( this has not been included in the savings to be made at this point)

Assumes museums staff will administer halls booking and open up and close building for usage whilst on site, and new structure chart be adopted.

### **Health and Safety**

All of the permanent North Hertfordshire District Council staff employed within the building will be qualified Fire Marshals and have basic First Aid training.

Daily visual inspections of the building will be undertaken to identify any potential operational risks. Weekly health and safety inspections will be undertaken to identify any potential maintenance issues that may be required. Quarterly Health and Safety reports on the condition of the building will be provided to the Council's Health and Safety Officer, with any risks identified and means and timescales for their rectification noted.

A Fire Risk Assessment log will be maintained, in conjunction with the Council's Health and Safety Officer and managed on an ongoing basis with any risks identified and means and timescales for their rectification noted.

A First Aid box and an Accident Register will be maintained at all times within the building.

The means of escape in an emergency will be displayed around the building with the procedure to be adopted to evacuate the building, in such circumstances, with the required assembly point indicated.

### **Licensing**

Operation of the building will be in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 as required. There are currently three Premises Licenses held by North Hertfordshire District Council in respect of the operation of the building which will be adhered to at all times as appropriate to their respective requirements in the use of the building.

Licensing in respect of the Performing Rights Society (PRS) and the Phonographic Performance Ltd (PPL) will also be in place at all times in respect of the playing of recorded music in all areas of the building.

### **Financial Accounting**

The responsibility for the financial accounting for the operation of the building, within North Hertfordshire District Council, will lie with the Head of Financial Services. This responsibility to be delegated via the Accountancy Manager, to the Customer Services Group Accountant.

### **Facility Usage Monitoring**

Statistics on the usage of the various areas of the building will be generated on a monthly basis.

## 8. RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk No.	Risk Owner	Title	Description	Category	Impact	Probability	I/P Score	Proximity	Last Review Date	Completed Risk Mitigating Actions	Ongoing Risk Mitigating Actions	Action Owner	Status of Actions
Pre decision & Procurement Phase Risks													
1	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Funding	There is a risk that funding is delayed/ there is no decision to invest in this project and secure funding. This will lead to:- - no decision on the future of either HTH or Hitchin & Letchworth Museums - inappropriate facilities remain - efficiencies not met - loss of reputation	Financial, Operational, People, Reputation, Strategic	3	2	8	4-6 months		Business Plan setting out invest to save proposition developed.	Community advised on when decision will be made and why. At each appropriate points in project.	Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing
2	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Trust	There is a risk that the Trust does not support the scheme. - the project would not be able to proceed	Financial, Operational, People, Reputation, Strategic	3	1	6	4-6 months		Trust interest in the property has been acknowledged at the design stage and scheme has been developed to be in line with the Trust's objectives.			Completed

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3	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Town Hall is listed	There is a risk that the Town Hall is listed as a building of architectural or historical merit leading to - increased costs - delay of scheme due to planning issues - requirements arising from Listing / Conservation constraints	Financial, Information, Operational, People, Regulatory, Reputation, Strategic	3	2	8	>6 months		Ensured that that building plans are sympathetic to age/location and potential listing of building.	Maintenance of regular contact with English Heritage, NHDC Conservation Officer & Planning Control Officers.		Completed
4	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Requirement for structural repair	There is a risk that further structural repairs or major repair items are identified. This would lead to - increased costs (could be significant) - project delayed or stopped	Financial, Operational, People, Reputation, Strategic	3	2	8	>6 months		Contingency allowed in budget.	Survey early on in the project would highlight any issues.		Ongoing
5	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Local Community views of the scheme	There is a risk that the local community will not support NHDC's proposals for the changes to Hitchin Town Hall. This may lead to the project not being .	Financial, Operational, People, Reputation, Strategic	2	3	7	4-6 months		Consultation via the Museums feasibility Working Group & Museums & Heritage Forum		Cultural Services Manager	
6	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Special requirements increase costs	There is a risk that due to Member/end User/Stakeholders special requirements there are increased costs of the Scheme.	Financial, People, Reputation,	2	2	5	Life of project		Expectation managed via Project Board		Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing

Building Phase

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7	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Discovery of asbestos	There is a risk that during the replacement of services there will be the discovery of unknown asbestos. This may require the removal of the asbestos. This would lead to- additional costs- project delayed	Financial, Operational, People, Regulatory,	2	1	3	>6 months		. Asbestos survey completed	Type three asbestos survey commissioned if project progressed		
8	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Impact of limited external space	There is a risk that due to the limited external space there is a lack of space available for site compounds / accommodation. This could lead to delivery of building materials being difficult. The consequences of this would be - minor project delays	Operational	1	1	1	Life of project			Internal area to be set aside for deliveries. Site agent to supervise deliveries.		Ongoing
9	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Passenger lift	There is a risk associated with the siting of the passenger lift. Failure to have it in the best location would lead to - breach of DDA requirements - new facility not fully accessible to all	Financial, Operational, People, Regulatory,	1	1	1	>6 months		.	Careful selection of the siting of the lift will be undertaken in the design process	Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing
10	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Glazing/ High level services	There is a risk that there is a failure to consider high level services and glazing at the design stage. This could lead to - injuries - failure to comply with Building Regulations - HSE prosecutions - claims for compensation	People, Regulatory,	2	1	3	>6 months			Building works will comply with current Building Regulations	Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing

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11	Head of Community & Cultural Services	Current hirers	There is a risk from relocating current hirers of the hall that they will not be able to continue in the temporary site or that they will not return to the Hall when the works are completed. This would lead to loss of revenue from these groups.	Financial, People,	1	2	2	End of project		Sprung floor to be provided in gym (will be able to maintain dance users)	Need to identify temporary accommodation and meet with existing users.		Ongoing
12	Cultural Services Manager	Collection move	There is a risk that inadequate preparation for the museum move would lead to - delayed opening or opening when the displays are incomplete - loss of reputation	Operational, Reputation,	2	1	3	>6 months		Work on collection care and conservation being planned ahead of decision. Learning from others who have recently been involved in similar museum developments.		Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing
Re-launch													
13	Head of Community & Cultural Services	Efficiency of new facility	There is a risk that the lack of appropriate management systems and controls for the new facility will make it unattractive to hire and inefficient to operate. - facility not fully used - loss of projected income	Financial, Operational, Reputation,	2	1	3	End of project		Plans have been developed in conjunction with existing hirers. JD's and working practices to be reviewed in line with the delivery of services at this site ahead of opening.			Ongoing

[illegible]



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18	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Finance s	There is a risk that NHDC is unable to continue to operate the Museums service and HTH at the current scale. This would lead to the loss of an effective museum service and project failure	Financial, Operational, People, Reputation,	3	3	9	Life of project		The plans proposed will reduce the level of subsidy required.		Head of Community & Cultural Services	Ongoing
19	Strategic Director of Customer Services	Key personnel	There is a loss or unavailability of key personnel at critical times. This could lead to - project delays - increased costs	Financial, Operational,	2	1	3	Life of project		Business Continuity plans in place		Strategic Director of Customer Services	Ongoing
20	Head of Community & Cultural Services	Café franchise	There is a risk of failure to franchise the café at zero cost. This would lead to - NHDC operating costs increase - café fit out is at NHDC cost	Financial, Operational,	2	2	5	End of project					Ongoing
21	Head of Community & Cultural Services	Cultural change	There is a risk that there is a failure to change culture when transferring and merging two museums, one hall and a café onto one site. This could lead to - bookings lost or double booked - conflict between service areas - loss of income - detrimental impact on reputation	Financial, Operational, People, Reputation,	1	2	2	End of project			Strong management of the services to ensure the change in culture happens.	Head of Community & Cultural Services	Ongoing

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22	Head of Community & Cultural Services	Procurement	<p>There is a risk that due to the requirement to use OJEU procurement that this will be time consuming and cause project delay.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There may be a failure to select the most appropriate contractor.</li> <li>- the contract may be more expensive than anticipated</li> <li>- the project may take longer than expected</li> </ul>	Financial, Regulatory, Reputation,	2	2	5	>6 months	Contract procurement rules applied.	Identify procurement plan for contractors and professional services. Project plan agreed with contractor to ensure no delays in completion. Contract terms.	Cultural Services Manager	Ongoing
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## 9. MAIN PHASES OF THE PROJECT

The principal phases of the project are set out below. There will be a shift in the use and need for resources between the time that this plan has been written and the end of the period covered by the plan. For this reasons the phases and their distinctive management challenges have been set out below.

### DECISION & PROCUREMENT

Prior to a decision being able to be made to invest in the redevelopment of this site the agreement of the Trust will be required.

Once a decision is made to support the progression of this project then further pieces of work will be required in this phase. Including:

- the appointment of a design team
- further design development and a formal planning application
- the development of working drawings
- tendering of the works following OJEU procedures
- application for external funding,
- evaluation of expressions of interest
- appointment of contractor
- commissioning of exhibition design and fit out work.
- identify café/franchise opportunity

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The Project Board exists to support this work, but much of the work required will need be commissioned by the service management, with specialist support for property services, finance and legal.

Existing lettings will be steadily re-located to other sites and existing staff re-deployed by NHDC as the building is slowly decanted ahead of the physical start of the building works. Consideration therefore needs to be given to the level of support that is available to those involved.

Based upon the experience of other museums who have enjoyed significant levels of investment in recent times, the need to dedicate a significant amount of time, space and resources to the following should not be underestimated:

- documentation and photography of collection
- collection cleaning
- conservation work

Therefore the arrangement with regards to forward booking of exhibitions and a more limited museum service during this period to free up the Museums curatorial staff to do this work should be considered.

The procurement of these works will be key to ensuring a cost effective and timely delivery of the project. Previous experience of large scale projects has shown this to be an area where NHDC has had some considerable successes in the recent past.

## MAJOR REPAIR

Major contract works and fit out work is expected to take approximately 14 months. The successful delivery of this work will require a detailed specification and contract to be produced for this work. This will include contingency arrangements to cover unforeseen events, and ensure that a realistic timescale, and budgets for the reopening of the hall are established and met.

Last minute changes in plans and designs will be costly, so investment of the correct resources at the planning stage to get the specification right, will ensure the most efficient outcome.

A significant amount of curatorial staffing time is likely to be required to oversee the execution of the exhibition design plans as they progress, and to oversee the decanting and transferring of artefacts from the old buildings to the new. The impact of these plans on the existing museums service has yet to be quantified.

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### RE-LAUNCH

The re-launch of the Town Hall will be the commencement of the initial period of this project. Any uncertainty around the date of building hand over arising from programme delays is likely to be a concern.

The opening will effectively be bring a smaller but much improved community venue back on to the market for hire and seek to attract a far wider range of hirers than previously. It may be some of those groups re-housed during the building works may choose not to move again, and so will be lost to Hitchin Town Hall.

The building will provide new opportunities to deliver a much improved Museums service with dedicated education space and much better public facilities on site. This will however require significant changes in the existing operating practises of the museums service. All staff will be relocated into this one building from the three existing sites, requiring them to work in a different way and to take on amended working practises based on a differing staffing structure. Exhibitions for the temporary gallery will need to be booked whilst the building works are in train, and there will be many lessons along the way. There are significant risk of service disruption arising from this period.

The operation of three separate businesses in this one building (museums including a new education resource and local study centre, halls hire and café) is likely to create an initial challenge to ensure their smooth running.

### RAMP-UP & REVIEW

Following the initial re-launch, the ramp up period objective will be for the Town Hall to be used to grow income generated from the site to offset more of the costs arising from the operation of the museums service and hall, whilst also looking to maximise the community benefit. Key outcomes of this work will be a more cost effective and efficient museums service and a reduction in the cost of the combined service to the tax payer.

This will be measured by

#### ***Museums***

*Number of visitors*

*No of temporary exhibitions/event held*

*No school children taught*

*Volunteering hours received*

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**Halls**

*Hours hired (utilisation)*

*Income figures*

**Café**

*Operated at zero cost to NHDC*

**Overall**

*Achievement of income and expenditure targets as contained within this business plan*

*Customer satisfaction*

This business plan is intended to cover the first three years of operation of the building. However an annual review of the assumptions made and outcomes achieved will be undertaken.

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**Budgets for 2009/10**

		Museums & Cultural Services Budgets											
		Hitchin Museum	Letchworth Museum	Burymead	Archaeology		Education		Natural History		Total Museums	Hitchin Town Hall	Grand Total
Expenditure			£	£	£		£		£		£	£	£
Staffing Costs	£ 104,310	127,100	11,150	44,420		55,050		4,190		346,220	78,245	424,465	
Repairs & Maintenance	£ 13,380	15,540	7,080	£ -	£ -	£ -		36,000		14,170	50,170		
Utilities	£ 5,060	7,040	5,760	£ -	£ -	£ -		17,860		10,430	28,290		
Business Rates	£ 9,940	10,670	12,200	£ -	£ -	£ -		32,810		13,580	46,390		
Transport costs	£ 100	250	£ -	£ -	3,000	£ -	£ 3,350	£ -		£ -	£ 3,350		
Supplies & Services	£ 21,520	17,380	2,460	7,460	6,080	2,960	57,860	£ 6,910		64,770			
Recharges	£ 32,860	35,410	22,030	3,540	4,370	£ 200	98,410	66,910		165,320			
Apportionment of Service		£	£	£	£	£	£	£		£			
Management Overheads	£ 32,331	39,394	3,456	13,768	17,063	1,299	107,310	43,305		150,615			
Total Expenditure	£ 219,501	252,784	64,136	69,188	85,563	8,649	699,820	233,550		933,370			
			-£			-£		-£		-£		-£	
Income	-£ 7,530	4,620	£ -	£ -	9,370	£ -	21,520	44,110		65,630			
			£	£	£	£	£	£		£			
Net Expenditure	£ 211,971	248,164	64,136	69,188	76,193	8,649	678,300	189,440		867,740			

CONFIDENTIAL  
Schedule of hire June 2010

[illegible]

CONFIDENTIAL

17.30								es											
18.00			CKD Junior s (1.5 Hrs)					(1.5hrs)											
19.00					Acapell a			(A)											
19.30										St John Ambula nce									
20.00			CKD	Line Danci ng	Classes (2.5 Hrs)	Judo	Rodn ey Schoo l of Dance	Pilates (1 hour)	Fencing		Zumba 1.45mins	Camara Club	CKD Junior s (1.5 Hrs)	Unicor n Ceilidh s					
20.30			(A)	(A)							Starts Septemb er		CKD						
20.45			Senior s (1.5 Hrs)	(3hrs)	(A)	(3.5 Hrs)	(4 Hrs)	(A)	(1.5hrs)	(1.5 Hrs)	(A)	(3 Hrs)	Senior s (1.5 Hrs)	(A)				Judo (2 Hrs)	
21.00				Starts Augu st			(A)		(A)					Includ es Bar Area					
22.00										(A)		(A)						(A)	
22.30						(A)								(6 Hrs )					
23.00																			
24.00																			
1.00																			

<b>KEY</b>		Fortnig htly Hire	4hrs
			48.9mins
		Weekly Hire Last Friday of Each Month	6 hrs

<b>RATES</b>	
A	Standard Rates Charged
B	Commercial Rates Charged - One off private events only
C	Charity Rates Charged
D	Social Enterprise



## HIRE CHARGES FOR PUBLIC HALLS 2009/2010

**Hitchin Town Hall**

**Main Hall** – capacity up to **250 seated** (tables and chairs provided) or **500 standing**. The Balcony is not available for hire.

	Hourly Rates	
	8.30am – 6pm	7am – 8.30am 6pm – 11.30pm
Weekdays – Monday to Friday	£14.00	£23.35
Weekends – Saturday and Sunday	£23.35	£40.80

**Bar or Kitchen**

	Flat rate charge per day
Weekdays – Monday to Friday	£17.50
Weekends – Saturday and Sunday	£29.20

**Lucas Room – Capacity 40**

	Hourly Rates	
	8.30am – 6pm	7am – 8.30am 6pm – 11.30pm
Weekdays – Monday to Friday	£9.30	£11.70
Weekends – Saturday and Sunday	£14.00	£18.65

**Gymnasium – Capacity 200**

	Hourly Rates	
	8.30am – 6pm	7am – 8.30am 6pm – 11.30pm
Weekdays – Monday to Friday	£9.30	£11.70
Weekends – Saturday and Sunday	£14.00	£18.65

**Notes:**

1. The **Standard Rate** above is that charged for 'Community' use.
2. Commercial rates i.e. events for profit or personal gain are charged at **Standard Rate** plus 50%.
3. Charities (proof of registration required) receive a 25% discount on the **Standard Rate**.
4. Social Enterprises that re-invest profits in the business, for Community benefit, are charged at **Standard Rate** plus 20%
5. Additional charges may be levied for extra hours, additional cleaning or damage.
6. Bancroft Hall and Brotherhood Hall are **NOT** licenced for public entertainment of any description

**Damage Bond Charges**

Main Hall	£1,000.00 (for one-off hirers i.e. weddings, concerts, large events etc)
Main Hall - Local and Voluntary Organisations/Charity	£100.00 (may be higher under certain conditions)
Gym	£250.00
Lucas Room	£50.00
Regular Hirers – All Halls	£50.00

## **North Herts Museums Service Museum Charges 2010-11**

### **1. Talks**

**£35.00** flat fee for all talks

### **2. Gallery Administration Fees (including VAT)**

**£32.50** Hitchin Museum, larger gallery

**£25.50** Hitchin Museum, smaller gallery

**£45.00** Hitchin Museum, both galleries

**£45.00** Letchworth Museum, Art Gallery

**£25.50** Letchworth Museum, Mezzanine

**£30.00** Letchworth Museum, Mezzanine – if more than one artist

### **3. Commission on works sold**

25% + vat on the commission

[As a public gallery we cannot charge more than 25% commission; no public galleries charge more than this]

### **4. Workshop/event charges**

These vary from free events (eg. toddlers' sessions; some drop-in sessions every school holiday) to between £1.00 and £2.50 for some children's holiday activities, depending on the value of the materials needed and the length of session. For adult talks with a glass of wine we currently charge up to £4.00, and for other adult art activities we have charged up to £40 for a day's tuition by an outside tutor. Staff value the flexibility of the current charging system, as it allows wide participation, and also allows us to offer a range of different types of session. For the more expensive adult events we always offer a concessionary rate.

### **5. School Charges (including VAT)**

#### **A. *Schools subscribing to Museums Service – annual agreement, per pupil***

**£0.70** annual subscription scheme – NHDC schools

**£0.95** annual subscription scheme – outside NHDC boundaries

The annual subscription scheme includes: - 30 loans per term, 2 talks in the museum and 1 talk in school.

#### **B. *Pay as you go for schools not subscribing, or exceeding their subscription quota***

**£2.70** Museum based workshops

**£265** Outreach, per session

**£375** Outreach, per day`

### **C. Loan Boxes only subscription for secondary schools**

**£35.00** (up to 30 items per term)

### **6. Archaeology Service**

**£42.50** per box, charged for excavated material and related paper archive

**£28.75** per box, for the archive only

**£28.75** one-off access charge for use of archive for commercially funded projects eg. Desktop assessment

### **7.. Publication Charges**

These vary, depending on whether the enquirer needs colour or black and white prints, colour transparencies or digital images. Because photography is undertaken by outside photographers, the Museum Service obtains estimates for this work. The charges also vary depending on whether the publication is a small local history pamphlet (where we might not make a charge in return for the publicity given to the museum/museum object by publication) or a book with a large print run. The charges will also vary depending on the placing of the image; a front cover image would cost more than one inside a publication.

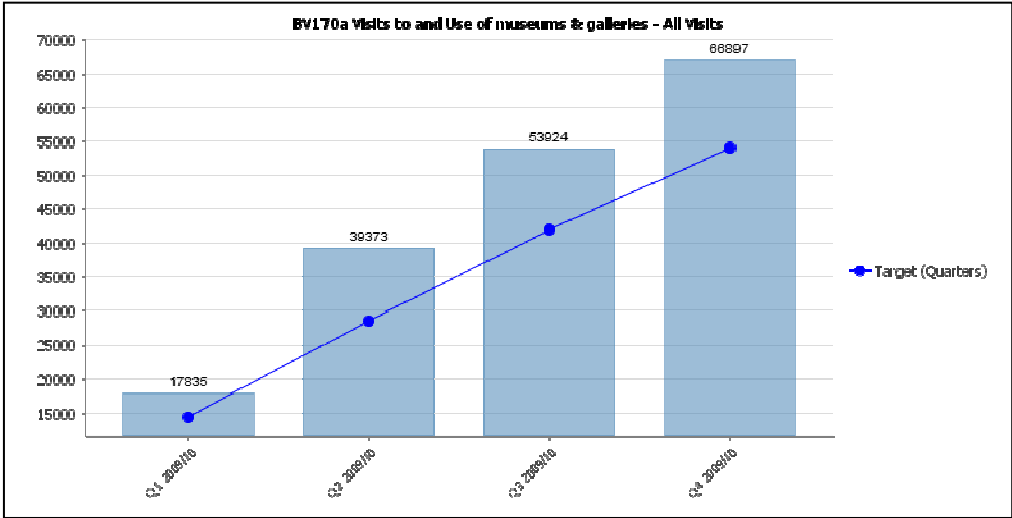
### **8. Research Charges**

If a member of the public asks a member of staff to undertake research that will take over half an hour, and will not directly add to knowledge about the museum collections, a fee of **£30.00** an hour may be levied. Such research is only undertaken after consultation.

RA  
17/05/10

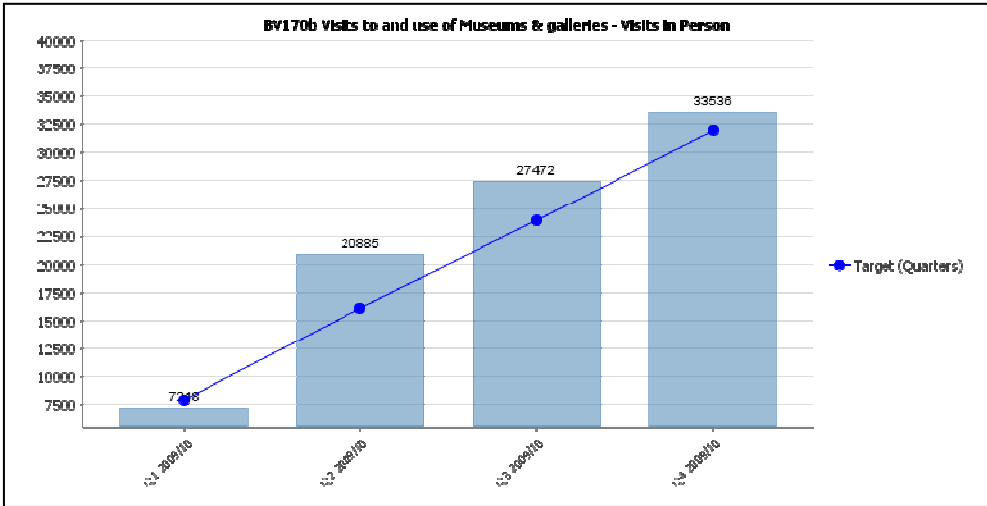
BV170a - Visits to and Use of museums & galleries - All Visits

	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend
Q1 2009/10	17835	14400	✔	⬆
Q2 2009/10	39373	28500	✔	⬆
Q3 2009/10	53924	42000	✔	⬆
Q4 2009/10	66897	54000	✔	⬆







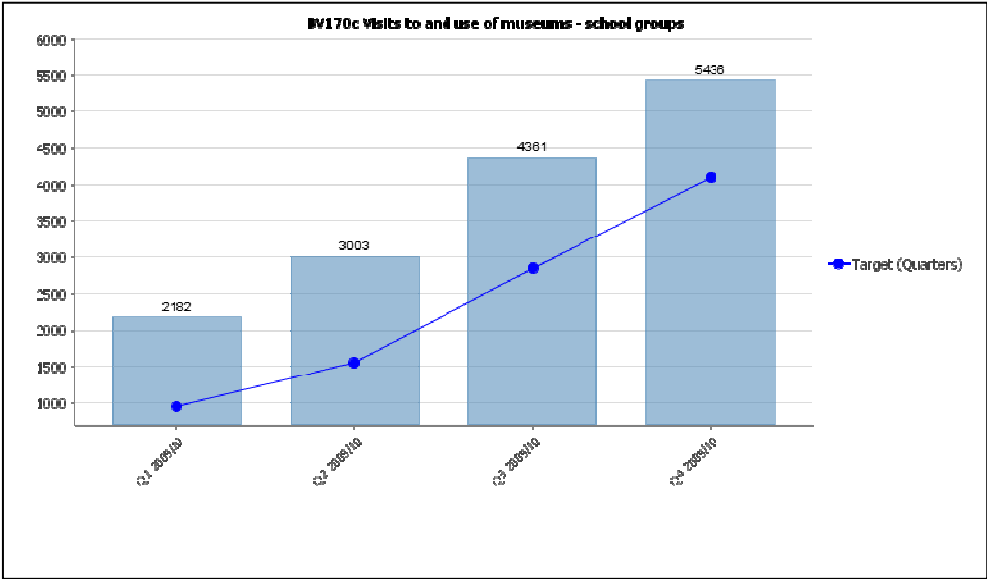
BV170b - Visits to and use of Museums & galleries - Visits in Person



	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend
Q1 2009/10	7218	7900	⚠	⬇
Q2 2009/10	20885	16150	✔	⬆
Q3 2009/10	27472	23900	✔	⬆
Q4 2009/10	33536	32000	✔	⬆





BV170c - Visits to and use of museums - school groups

	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend
Q1 2009/10	2182	950		
Q2 2009/10	3003	1550		
Q3 2009/10	4361	2850		
Q4 2009/10	5436	4100		



PI Status	
	The return for this PI has not achieved the target figure but it is within the agreed tolerance range.
	The return for this PI has met or exceeded the target figure.

Short / Long Trends	
	The return for this PI has improved compared with the same time last year.
	The return for this PI has worsened compared with the same time last year.

North Hertfordshire District Council



Proposed Hitchin Town Hall & Museums Service Staffing Structure Chart

