

HITCHIN TOWN HALL – MUSEUM FEASIBILITY STUDY

AGENDA ITEM 7

TECHNICAL ANNEX

REPORT TO CABINET 20 OCTOBER 2009

HITCHIN TOWN HALL

MUSEUM FEASIBILITY STUDY

CONTENTS

BUDGETS	3
SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN HITCHIN	4
HITCHIN TOWN HALL BRIEF HISTORY & BACKGROUND	6
HITCHIN TOWN HALL PERFORMANCE & USAGE ANALYSIS	7
HITCHIN TOWN HALL REGULAR HIRE PROFILES	8
HITCHIN TOWN HALL CASUAL BOOKINGS (PRIVATE FUNCTION) SUMMARY	9
HIRE CHARGES PUBLIC HALLS & BASIS FOR RATES	10
HITCHIN TOWN HALL REFURBISHMENT AND TRANSFER PROPOSAL 2007	12
THE COLLECTIONS OF NORTH HERTS MUSEUMS SERVICE	13
EXISTING MUSEUMS ACCOMMODATION & USE OF SPACE PROPOSED	14

Budgets for 2009/10

	Hitchin Museum		Letchworth Museum		Total for Burymead, Archaeology, Education & Natural History		Sub Total	Hitchin Town Hall	Grand Total			
Expenditure												
Staffing Costs	£	104,310	£	127,100	£	114,810	£	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	£	18,960	£	57,860	£	6,910	£	64,770
Total Direct Costs	£	154,310	£	177,980	£	161,810	£	494,100	£	123,335	£	617,435
Corporate Recharges	£	32,860	£	35,410	£	30,140	£	98,410	£	66,910	£	165,320
Museums Internal Overheads	£	12,641	£	15,403	£	13,913	£	41,957	£	43,305	£	85,262
Total Overheads	£	45,501	£	50,813	£	44,053	£	140,367	£	110,215	£	250,582
Total Expenditure	£	199,811	£	228,793	£	205,863	£	634,467	£	233,550	£	868,017
Income	-£	7,530	-£	4,620	-£	9,370	-£	21,520	-£	44,110	-£	65,630
Net Expenditure	£	192,281	£	224,173	£	196,493	£	612,947	£	189,440	£	802,387

SUMMARY COMPARISON OF COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN HITCHIN

As part of the investigation into the future use of Hitchin Town Hall, a desk top analysis was undertaken to establish the extent and nature of the community facilities within Hitchin, provided by a variety of private, public and voluntary sector sources, and to gain a view on level of usage of those facilities.

This analysis took the form of an audit of thirty five (35) community centres, halls, church halls, schools etc, all located within a 3000m radius of the Town Hall itself. Each facility was contacted and information gathered on its size, capacity, availability for hire, current hire groups, and where possible, an estimate of its current level of usage determined.

From the information obtained, the facilities were graded into four bands depending on the nature and extent of availability for use by the general public.

Hitchin Town Hall was graded as an A1, with others graded from A2 to D1 to reflect the nature and extent of the respective hire options / facilities available

The number of facilities and their relative grading descriptions are shown below.

A1	-	Hitchin Town Hall	1
A2	-	Urban Community Centres	5
B1	-	Less facilities available / capacity for hire than A2	11
C1	-	Less facilities available / capacity for hire than B1	10
D1	-	Specialist / Focussed Hire	8

From the survey, and where it was possible to make an assessment, it was estimated that the overall usage operating capacity of the facilities was 70 %.

A list of the facilities surveyed is attached as is a diagram showing their locations, in relation to Hitchin Town Hall.

Source: Audit undertaken as part of investigation into future use of Hitchin Town Hall reported to Cabinet 26. 06.07

COMMUNITY FACILITIES IN HITCHIN

Ana Ref.	Cat	Sub Cat	Facility	Address	
H16	AR	1	Hitchin Town Hall	Town Hall, Brand Street	SG5 1HX
H1	AR	2	Bancroft Hall	Bancroft Hall	
H28	AR	2	St Michaels Mount Community Centre	St. Michael's Road	SG4 0QY
H30	AR	2	St.John's Community Centre	St John's Road	
H34	AR	2	Walsworth Community Centre	88, Woolgrove Road	SG4 0AU
H36	AR	2	Westmill Community Centre	Westmill Community Centre	SG5 2PG
H3	BB	1	Christchurch Hall	Bedford Road	SG5 1HR
H4	BB	1	Church House	Churchyard	SG5 1HP
H5	BB	1	Friends' Meeting House	Brand Street	
H11	BB	1	Hitchin Christian Centre	Hitchin	
H17	BB	1	Holy Saviour Church	Radcliffe Road	
H20	BB	1	N Herts Minority Ethnic Forum	Unity House, Whinbush Road	SG5 1PH
H32	BB	1	Sun Hotel	Sun Hotel	
H31	BB	1	St.Mary's Church	St. Mary's Church	
H33	BB	1	Tilehouse Street Baptist Church Hall	Tilehouse Street Baptist Church Hall	SG5 2EF
H35	BB	1	Walsworth Road Baptist Church Hall	Walsworth Road	
H38	BB	1	Woodside Hall	Woodside Hall	
H2	CG	1	Benslow Music Trust	Ibberson Way, Benslow Lane	SG4 9RB
H8	CG	1	Highover School	Cambridge Road	SG4 0JP
H12	CG	1	Hitchin Girl's School Hall	Highbury Road	
H15	CG	1	Hitchin Priory	Tilehouse Street	SG5 2DL
H19	CG	1	Legion Hall	Paynes Park	
H21	CG	1	North Herts College	North Herts College	
H24	CG	1	Priory School	Bedford Road	SG5 2UR
H29	CG	1	St.Faith's Church Hall	Woolgrove Road	
H37	CG	1	Wilshere-Dacre School	Fishponds Road	SG5 1NS
H39	CG	1	Hitchin Town F.C.	Fishponds Road	
H7	DO	1	HBS Sports Centre	Sports Centre of Hitchin Boys' School	SG5 1JB
H10	DO	1	Hitchin British Schools	41-42 Queen Street	SG4 9TS
H13	DO	1	Hitchin Market Theatre	Sun Street	SG5 1AE
H14	DO	1	Hitchin Museum	Paynes Park	SG5 1EH
H22	DO	1	North Herts. College Sports Centre	Cambridge Road	SG4 0JD
H25	DO	1	Queen Mother Theatre	Woodside, Walsworth Road	SG4 9SP
H26	DO	1	Ravidassia Community Centre	Knowl Piece	SG4 0TY
H27	DO	1	Riverain Bowls Club	Woolgrove Road	SG4 0AT

Source: Audit undertaken as part of investigation into future use of Hitchin Town Hall reported to Cabinet 26. 06.07

HITCHIN TOWN HALL BRIEF HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Hitchin Town Hall was built around 1901. It is situated in Brand Street, in the town centre. The accommodation is arranged on three floors and basement, offering a flexibility of space to provide for a wide range of activities taking place at the same time such as dance/music, sports general meetings. It is an ideal venue to hold a variety of private, public and celebratory functions including wedding receptions, christenings, barmitsvabs, birthday parties, business meetings, conferences, seminars, training programmes, product launches and club meetings.

The Town Hall is the largest hall in terms of size and capacity in Hitchin (holding up to 800 persons) It provides for 30,000 persons living within a two mile radius as well as users from other parts of North Hertfordshire. Its nearest competitor is generally regarded as the Gordon Craig Theatre in Stevenage.

The Main hall on the ground floor has a capacity for up to 300 people seated with tables and chairs and 500 people standing. It has a wooden sprung floor and a proscenium stage.

The Gymnasium also on the ground floor and has a capacity for up to 200 people.

The Lucas room on the first floor has a capacity for up to 40 people.

The Bar on the ground floor has a capacity for up to 20 people.

The Upper Hall on the second floor above the gymnasium is currently solely used by St Johns Ambulance.

There are other ancillary spaces in the building including cloak rooms and a storage area on the ground floor, an office, a balcony and changing rooms on the first floor and changing rooms in the basement below the stage. There are also ample toilet facilities including a disabled one.

The accommodation comes with limited parking spaces (four to the side and four to the rear) However, there are a number of public and private car parking spaces spread throughout the town centre that are mostly located within a few minutes walking distance of the Town Hall.

Even though the Main hall and the Gymnasium have disabled access and there is a disabled toilet on the ground floor, the building does not fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

Source: Community Assets Grant Application, A joint bid by NHDC & Hitchin Town Centre Initiative, Nov 2007

PERFORMANCE: MANAGED HALLS

Source: Gladstone Bookings Database

YEAR	HIRE HOURS	OVERALL AVERAGE FACILITY UTILISATION	NUMBER OF HIRE BOOKINGS	
			Regular	Event
<u>2006/07</u>	4850.0	27.8%	No figs	No figs
<u>2007/08</u>	4632.0	26.5%	No figs	No figs
<u>2008/09</u>	3666.4	21.0%	837	116

Overall utilisation of the hall has been well below a third for the last three years and continues to decline as the future of the hall remains uncertain. Just over 2 Event/Occasional hire booking took place at the hall each week last year.

USAGE by CATAGORY: Managed Halls

Source: Gladstone Bookings Database

USAGE CATAGORY	OVERALL AVERAGE USAGE / CATAGORY	
	<u>2008 All Halls</u>	<u>2008 Hitchin Town Hall</u>
1. Babies and Young Children	2.4%	5.9%
2. Adult Education	1.9%	0.11%
3. Health/Fitness/Sports	19.5%	31.6%
4. Older Age Groups	9.6%	5.4%
5. Youth Activities	1.8%	0.2%
6. Meetings /Miscellaneous	28.7%	20.9%
7. Parties/Private Functions	25.8%	29.0%
8. Blood Donors	3.4%	3.4%
9. Music/Bands	6.9%	3.4%

It is difficult to differentiate strictly between commercial, private and community usage of the hall, but the above show three user types accounting for the majority of the usage hours at this hall.

HITCHIN TOWN HALL REGULAR HIRE PROFILE

TIME	MON			TUE			WED				THUR			FRI			SAT			SUN
	Main Hall	Lucas Rm	Gym	Main Hall	Lucas Rm	Gym	Main Hall	Lucas Rm	Gym	St. Johns	Main Hall	Lucas Rm	Gym	Main Hall	Lucas Rm	Gym	Main Hall	Lucas Rm	Gym	
8.00																				
9.00																				
9.15																				
9.30																				
9.45																				
10.00																				
10.15		Talking Tots (2 Hrs)	Aerobics (1.5 hrs)		Baby Signing (2 Hrs)			Talking Tots (1 Hrs)				Baby Signing (2 Hrs)								
10.30																				
10.45																				
11.00																				
11.15																				
11.30																				
11.45																				
12.00																				
12.30																				
13.00																				
13.30																				
14.00																				
14.30					Talking Tots (1 Hrs)															
15.00																				
16.00																				
16.30																				
17.00																				
17.30																				
18.00																				
19.00			CKD Juniors (1.5 Hrs)																	
19.30			CKD Seniors (1.5 Hrs)																	
20.00																				
20.30																				
21.00																				
21.30																				
22.00																				
22.30																				
23.00																				
24.00																				
1.00																				

KEY

Weekly Hire
Last Friday of Each Month

Notes

- Last Friday of Every Month
- Hire of Bar Area Excluded from Analysis as Usually Complimentary to Hire of Other Areas of the Building
- St John Ambulance (Seniors) in St. John's Room every week for 1.5 hrs

UsageNotes

- Core Usage Times: 9.00am / 5.00 pm (Mon - Fri) = 40 hrs / Week
- Current Core Usage / Week: 21.5 hrs plus plus assumed Event Hires at xx / week & xx hrs / occ. = xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Based on regular weekly hrs as shown above, plus 0.5hrs /week for BT Pensioners, plus assumed use by Blood Donors & 1 x month & 9.25 hrs per occ / 4 = 2.5 hrs /week on average
- Total Usage Times: 8.00am / 0.00 pm (Mon - Fri and 8.00am / 1.00am (Sat & Sun) = xxx hrs / Week
Based on regular weekly hrs as shown above, plus 1.5hrs /week for Unicorn Celiidhs
- Current Overall Usage / Week: 14 Core Hours + 10 Non Core Hours + estimated average of 2 Event Hires / Week at 6hrs / occ. = 36 Hours / Week. Therefore Average Total Usage : 36/112 = 32%

PRIVATE FUNCTIONS BOOKED AT HITCHIN TOWN HALL- AUGUST TO END OF DECEMBER 2009

MONTH	DAY	DATE	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	AREAS TO BE USED				
				Main Hall	Kitchen	Bar	Gym	Lucas Rm
AUGUST	Saturday	1st	Wedding Party	Y	Y	N	N	Y
	Sunday	2nd	Wedding Party	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
	Friday	14th	Wedding Reception	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
	Saturday	15th	Pre-Wedding Party	Y	Y	Y	N	N
	Sunday	16th	Wedding Reception	Y	Y	N	Y	N
	Friday	28th	Wrestling Event	Y	N	N	N	N
	Saturday	29th	Wedding Reception	Y	Y	N	N	N
	Sunday	30th	Church Event	Y	Y	N	N	N
SEPTEMBER	Saturday	19th	Party	Y	Y	Y	N	N
	Saturday	26th	Muslim Community Charity Event	Y	Y	N	Y	N
OCTOBER	Saturday	3rd	Retirement Party	Y	Y	Y	N	N
	Friday	9th	Indi Rock Concert	Y	Y	Y	N	N
			North Herts Reel Club - Annual	Y	Y			
	Saturday	10th	Dance			N	Y	N
	Saturday	17th	World Mental Health Day	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
	Sunday	18th	Wedding Reception	Y	Y	N	N	N
	Saturday	24th	Provisional - No Details	Y	Y	Y	N	N
	Saturday	31st	Wedding Reception	Y	Y	Y	N	N
NOVEMBER	Saturday	7th	40th Birthday Party	Y	Y	Y	N	N
	Saturday	21st	Baby and Toddler Fair	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
	Saturday	28th	Hitchin Rotary Club Food Fair	Y	Y	N	N	N
	Sunday	29th	Hitchin Rotary Club Food Fair	Y	Y	N	N	N
DECEMBER	Saturday	12th	Royal British Legion Carol Concert	Y	Y	N	N	N
	Saturday	19th	British Schools Concert	Y	Y	N	N	N
	Thursday	31st	Unicorn Ceilidhs Barn Dance	Y	Y	Y	N	N



HIRE CHARGES FOR PUBLIC HALLS 2009/2010

Hitchin Town Hall, Bancroft Hall, Brotherhood Hall

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

Bancroft Hall

Use of kitchen is integral – **Capacity 70**

	Hourly Rates	
	8.30am – 6pm	7am – 8.30am 6pm – 11.30pm
Weekdays – Monday to Friday	£8.20	£12.30
Weekends – Saturday and Sunday	£12.30	£16.45

Brotherhood Hall

Use of kitchen is integral – **Capacity 70**

	Hourly Rates	
	8.30am – 6pm	7am – 8.30am 6pm – 11.30pm
Weekdays – Monday to Friday	£9.30	£14.00
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

Bancroft Hall and Brotherhood Hall	£250.00
Local and Voluntary Organisations/Charity	£100.00
Regular Hirers – All Halls	£50.00

HITCHIN TOWN HALL REFURBISHMENT AND TRANSFER PROPOSAL - COST ANALYSIS

Works package	Cost £k Dec 2005	Inflation to Dec 2007	Work Added by BS	Work Added by JT	Total	Justification	Add 5% To Project Start for Inflation	Revised Total	Total with VAT @ 17.5%	VAT	Overall Project Costs
<u>HTCi Costing For Capital Works</u>											
DDA Accessibility including lift to Lucas Room	48	52.3			52.3	DDA	2.62	54.92	64.53		
Re-locate management office, provide box office	16	17.5			17.5	DDA FM WEL	0.88	18.38	21.59		
Upgrade & increase WC provision	72	78.5			78.5	DDA COM CAP	3.93	82.43	96.85		
Optimise Break-out area, DDA compliance, new servery	31	34			34	DDA COM CAP	1.70	35.70	41.95		
Make Green Room independently lettable (Semi-Basement)	8	8.7	5		13.7	GRO FM	0.69	14.39	16.90		
Re-cover seating and other works to re-open Mountford Hall balcony	16	17.5			17.5	DDA CAP	0.88	18.38	21.59		
Gymnasium slate roof new covering	25	27.3			27.3	FM	1.37	28.67	33.68		
Improvements to Gymnasium			25		25		1.25	26.25	30.84		
Mechanical installation	10	11			11	FM	0.55	11.55	13.57		
Redecoration of high impact public areas	25	27.3			27.3	COM	1.37	28.67	33.68		
External envelope/front elevation	25	27.3	25		52.3	DDA COM WEL	2.62	54.92	64.53		
Cyclical Maintenance Backlog Items	78	85	15		100	FM CAP	5.00	105.00	123.38		
Heat Recovery Ventilation system to Montford Hall	50	54.5			54.5	CAP COM	2.73	57.23	67.24		
Heat Recovery Ventilation system to remainder of building and other energy saving works			25		25		1.25	26.25	30.84		
Self contain office spaces and utilities serving	19.5	21.3			21.3	CO FM	1.07	22.37	26.28		
Reconfigure intruder & fire alarm zones & connections	10	11			11	FM COM	0.55	11.55	13.57		
Acoustic treatment Mountford Hall	5	5.5	25		30.5	COM	1.53	32.03	37.63		
Fitting Out	26.6	29			29		1.45	30.45	35.78		
<u>NHDC Costings For Capital Works</u>											
Refurbishment of Bell Tower				85	85	JT	4.25	89.25	104.87		
Replacement of Leadwork / Canopy Over				35	35	JT	1.75	36.75	43.18		
Rectification of damp penetration in				10	10	JT	0.50	10.50	12.34		
Insulation to Roof Void Over Main Hall				2	2	JT	0.10	2.10	2.47		
Works Total	465.1	507.7	120	132	759.7		37.99	797.69	937.28		
10% Works Contingency								79.76	93.72		
Overall Works Total								877.45	1031.00		
<u>NHDC Project Delivery</u>											
Design & Development / Professional Fees & Expenses @ 6%						JT		52.65	61.86		
VAT Element Only										162.77	
Grand Total (Net of VAT)								930.09			
Grand Total (Incl. of VAT)											1092.86

	YEAR1			YEAR 2		
	PRIME	VAT	TOTAL	PRIME	VAT	TOTAL
	£52.65	£9.21	61.86	797.69	139.59	937.28
				79.76	13.96	93.72
TOTALS	£52.65	£9.21	61.86	877.45	153.55	1031.00

CHECKSUM	1092.86
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Source: Community Assets Grant Application, A joint bid by NHDC & Hitchin Town Centre Initiative, Nov 2007

THE COLLECTIONS OF NORTH HERTS MUSEUMS SERVICE

The collections displayed at Hitchin and Letchworth Museums are very different, and these notes aim to explain why this is, and to clarify the differences.

Historically, in their early years both museums collected items of mainly local historical and cultural interest. Letchworth Museum was founded in 1914, and Hitchin in 1941 (Hitchin Library opened in 1938). After the foundation of NHDC in 1974 the two museums joined to become North Herts. Museums Service, with a shared Director of Museums. The two natural history collections were amalgamated to form a Natural History Department, and the museums began to specialise, Letchworth in the natural history and archaeology of the district, and Hitchin in local and social history, costume, and the Herts. Yeomanry collections. The Hitchin collections (objects and archives) have always covered many of the villages in the district. After 1974 Letchworth Museum's Schools Service began to provide classes at Hitchin, and the School Loan Service served the district and beyond. Both museums continued to collect and display watercolours and oil paintings. In 1990 Hitchin Museum's natural history display was moved from the museum, and the Chemist's Shop opened in its place.

From 1977 the history of Letchworth Garden City, originally displayed at Letchworth Museum, was shown in a new museum on Norton Way South, in a house which had originally been the drawing office of architects Parker & Unwin. There had been occasional exhibitions here from 1973, but an extension was built and the museum opened informally in 1977, and officially the following year. It was run by NHDC, managed by the Curator of Letchworth Museum with a Local History Assistant in charge. In 1984 the administration was taken over by Letchworth Corporation, now the First Garden City Heritage Foundation, although ownership of the Garden City collections acquired up to that date remains with NHDC. Since then, excluding paintings, Letchworth Museum has not collected items relating to the Garden City.

Material from the collections of both museums which is not on display is stored either on site (mainly delicate items like costume and fine art) or in the museum service store. This has moved around the district, from Baldock to Mrs Howard Hall, to its current site on Burymead Road. This store contains large amounts of social history material from both museums, as well as the archaeology and natural history collections, the Education Loan Collection, and an archive of local newspapers.

In conclusion, Letchworth Museum has very little local or social history on display, and does not function as a 'local' museum in the same way as Hitchin. Most of its local material is already at the Garden City Heritage Museum. If Letchworth Museum closes, its current collections would not be of any interest to the Heritage Museum, as they are not Garden City specific. There is one showcase about the villages of Norton, Willian and Letchworth, and a small display about the Norton Community Archaeology project but these are the only displays directly related to the town. It is fair to say that around 90% of objects on view at Hitchin Museum are directly related to that town, whereas 90% of the permanent displays at Letchworth Museum show material from all over the district, and are not exclusively related to Letchworth.

RA 14/10/09

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 generic room types.

Using the following definition of 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.

USE	Existing Area (m2)	Preferred Option 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
TOTAL	808	1942

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