

ABINGDON TOWN COUNCIL

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| Report to | Finance Governance & Asset Management Committee |
| Meeting date | 21 st June 2022 |
| Report author | Victoria Moore |
| Agenda item | 11 |

REPORT OF THE PROPERTIES OFFICER

1. **Purpose of the Report**

- 1.1 To Update members of current works and property progress in relation the Guildhall complex

2. **Summary**

2.1 **Current works and property Progress –**

No active works within the Guildhall are in progress at the time of this report.

The mayor's toilet has been fully refurbished, and decoration is complete.

- 2.2 **Royse Drains** – Ridge have completed all drainage surveys. This information has now been collated and written into a report by Ridge recommending two proposals for the redirection of the drainage system. Ridge have submitted a foul drainage remedial options assessment report. This report can be found in Appendix 1.

- 2.3 **Guildhall Stonework** – On completion of the Guildhall external surveys a report has been submitted detailing the repairs necessary to repairs the consistent dripping and damp penetrating from the external stone staircase. On completion of these leak and damp repairs the stonework repairs can follow. A copy of the report and recommendation can be found in Appendix 2.

- 2.4 **Guildhall Roof** – Planning application for replacement of skylights has been submitted to VWHDC Planning.

3. **Action required**

- 3.1 Members are asked to note **Current works and property progress**
- 3.2 Members are asked to note **Guildhall Roof**
- 3.3 Members are asked to approve **Royse Drains report proposal**
- 3.4 Members are asked to approve the **Guildhall Stonework proposal**

4. **Link to strategic plan and objectives**

- 4.1 Maintenance and improvement programme yr 3
- 4.2 Primary linked objective:
KO2: To develop a resilient, sustainable town which will provide a home for residents now and in the future.
- 4.3 Other objectives addressed:
KO1: To respond effectively and speedily to the climate emergency.
- 4.4 KO3: To manage the Council's assets efficiently and effectively to meet for the needs of the community now and in the future.

5. **Background**

- 5.1 **Current works and property progress** – Stages of works are included within the 'revised' agreed schedule of works in line with councils 5 yr. strategic plan which was noted by members at the Finance, Governance and Asset Management Advisory Committee on 23rd November 2021.
- 5.2 **Royse Drains** – In response to the survey carried out by Lanes for Drains back in 2020 which highlighted the drain issues under Royse offices. From February 2022 Ridge have been undertaking topographical surveys, camera drain surveys and obtained an updated foul drain and drainage channel map of Abbey Close and surrounding streets to establish the up-to-date underground drainage channels surrounding the Guildhall complex.
- 5.3 **Guildhall Stonework** – The stonework on the external walls of the Old Magistrates Court, concrete staircase (1950's addition) and the archway is continuing to corrode. Upon investigation Andrew Townsend Architects found water ingress penetrating through the external concrete staircase causing severe damp and decay within the Robing room WC area and original gateway of Royse Court. Before

any repairs to external stonework of the Guildhall external façade can commence the leaking external staircase must be rectified.

- 5.4 **Guildhall Roof – Ridge** was appointed to survey the Guildhall roof in November 2020 due to water ingress. The properties officer has appointed a contractor to carry out the repairs highlighted in the report. Before roofing repairs can start planning permission must be obtained.

6. **Key information and options**

- 6.1 **Current works and property progress** – are in line with the properties officer revised schedule of works to improve and maintain council properties.

- 6.2 **Royse Drains** – Ridges report clearly details the works required to redirect the existing failing drain running beneath Royse Court offices to Bridge Street to a new more sustainable long-term run via the Guildhall carpark, to Abbey Close and into the main Thames Water sewer network. As Properties Officer I recommend members agree to 'Option 1' in relation to the repairs which is also preferred by Ridge. Option 1 presents the lowest risk long term, it is a gravity system - no mechanical pumps needed eliminating servicing or maintenance, no difficult installation issues, and most importantly lower costs. The redirection will completely cut off the current decaying drain running underneath Royse court and redirecting the waste via the new drain. The Royse court drain will be filled and sealed which will remove any further risk of collapse. If approved, the next steps will be to make a 106 application to Thames Water to apply for a sewer connection followed by an underground utilities survey of Abbey Close and Bridge Street to check for any below ground wiring, pipes, water, power, fibre optics, drainage, sewage, gas, or telecommunications beneath the area prior to works. On acceptance of the 106 Thames Water application and a clear utilities survey works can commence. Total costs including construction, 106 Application, Utilities Survey and tender administration costs will be £40,000.

- 6.2 **Guildhall Stonework** – Following surveys of the External Guildhall water ingress Andrew Townend Architects with the agreement of the properties officer arranged for Graham Stone of Stonehouse Waterproofing to come to site to discuss the best form of repair to the consistent water ingress coming from the external concrete staircase. Stonehouse wrote a report detailing the ingress issues and have recommended to install a waterproofing system whereby a water resilient cavity is installed into the roof between the staircase and robing room. This membrane will allow water to collect and then fall via directed channels to a floor drain which will feed into the Thames water surface drain in Abbey Close. Difficulties with grade 2 listings such as

the Guildhall, can make such works very costly and difficult to obtain planning. The above method has been especially designed for such buildings and is fully reversible meaning any planning should be easily passed. Members are asked to approve the above works as Phase 1 for the Guildhall stonework. Andrew Townsend is obtaining quotes from three building contractors who will work alongside Stonehouse in doing the buildings works outlined within the Stonehouse report. Once these works are complete Phase two of stonework refurbishment can commence. Cost for the Waterproof membrane points 2 & 4 in the Stonehouse report £14,945.00.

- 6.3 **Guildhall Roof** – Planning permission for the replacement of two roof lights has been submitted to VWHDC which has been accepted and is currently under the consultation period. Decision should be received by July. Planning reference P22/V1153/LB.

7. **Financial/budget implications**

- 8.1 All monies for the forementioned works have been budgeted and agreed. There are no current financial implications.

8. **HR implications**

- 8.1 Items detailed in the above report will have no additional implications to staff.

9. **Supporting papers and appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1 Ridge Report Roysee Drains

9.2 Appendix 2 Stonehouse Report – Robing room Damp

Victoria Moore
Properties Officer
June 2022