

Craven District Council

Skipton Town Hall



Business Plan

v1.0

Approved: TBC

FOREWORD

The aim of the Council is to secure a sustainable future for a restored and improved Town Hall for use by the local community. Not only does this Council accept responsibility for delivering this aim but it relishes the challenge of acting now to secure the Town Hall for future generations.

As the Council's Lead Member for Skipton Town Hall I am pleased to present this Business Plan setting out how Craven District Council will deliver an improved and sustainable Town Hall. This includes work to improve and enhance public access to the building, to retain and improve the Museum and Tourist Information Centre, maintain and improve the Main Hall as a major public space for enjoyment by residents and visitors and find a ways of reducing approximately £300,000 per annum which it currently costs the Council Tax payers of Craven to operate the building and services.

The restoration of the Town Hall will be implemented through two phases. Phase 1 delivers much needed improvements including a lift to the upper floors and the restoration of the Town Hall steps. Phase 2 offers a wide range of options to capitalise on the Town Halls' community, heritage, and commercial opportunities. These opportunities will be explored in detail within Phase 2 including an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund setting out how the Town Hall can showcase Cravens' heritage.

No one is keener than I to maintain and enhance the community use of the building and restoring it to its former glory for the enjoyment of the people of Skipton and Craven. I hope you will support me in achieving this aim.



Councillor Simon Myers

Lead Member for Skipton Town Hall and Enterprising Craven

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1. INTRODUCTION

This business plan sets out how Craven District Council will achieve its aim of securing a sustainable future for a restored and improved Skipton Town Hall for use by the local community.

The Council recognises that the Town Hall is of significant historic importance, being a key building located in a prominent position on the High Street. As such the Council understands the importance of being sympathetic to the refurbishment of the building whilst creating a modern, fit for purpose, community facility.

The Town Hall currently hosts a number of existing Council services including the Craven Museum & Gallery, Tourist Information Centre and a varied events programme. However, the building is underused with vacant space and significant opportunities for improved service delivery and complementary activities.

This business plan provides a short history of the building, details of its current use, condition and layout. The plan details the results of public consultation, feedback from Members and the development of a series of key principles for a refurbishment programme. The Town Hall principles act as the basis of a phased approach for refurbishment from urgent works to a Phase 1 project and longer term aspirational works. The business plan concludes with an indicative timescale for the redevelopment process although dates should be viewed with caution where dependencies such as failure to secure external funding may affect this significantly.

This business plan should not be seen as complete document; rather an evolving plan that introduces a vision for the refurbished Town Hall, an approach to phasing, and opportunities for wider development. As the refurbishment progresses and opportunities are identified individual projects or phases will require further development work, design, identification of funding and consultation prior to implementation.

2. TOWN HALL VISION

The Council's vision for Skipton Town Hall is to restore the building as a sustainable, vibrant community venue to **educate, inspire and entertain**.

Through this vision the Council will work to undertake the long term restoration of Skipton Town Hall with the support of local organisations, funding bodies and professionals for the benefit of residents and visitors to Craven.

3. TOWN HALL AIMS

To deliver the vision for the refurbishment of the Town Hall the three aims below encompass the work required to provide a vibrant community venue:

- To provide a venue that is a focal point for **events** and **community use**;
- To restore and retain the **historical characteristics** and upgrade the overall fabric of the building.
- To provide **high quality** commercial and leasing opportunities;

4. EVOLUTION OF THE TOWN HALL

The historical development of the Town Hall and associated buildings has been well researched and documented by a number of organisations. This section of the Business Plan has been informed by a Conservation Statement and Appraisal produced by historic building consultant, Susan Wrathmell, MA, IHBC on behalf of Craven District Council.

The Conservation Statement and Appraisal presented at Appendix A, aims to contribute to an understanding of the Town Hall's importance and inspire its restoration. The summary below describes the key features within each building and details an evolution of the building over time.

The Town Hall

The Town Hall, opened in 1862, was designed to contain the four elements considered essential for a Victorian civic building at a period when industrial wealth and civic pride were being given architectural expression. The left (north) side main rooms were offices for the Treasurer and Town Clerk, the front right were the magistrates' court, with an impressive entrance hall and grand staircase leading to the council chamber, reception rooms and offices.

Front range: original features and alterations

The room survey has identified the original front offices and a smaller council chamber, blocked fireplaces and some gas lighting, rear yard and privies, no fewer than three strong-rooms with steel doors, and part of the Victorian colour scheme. There were later sash window changes and many modifications, responses to the rapid population growth and administration needs of the industrial town. Room changes and new heating systems were introduced in the 1920s and '30s, the neighbouring 1838 building (nos. 17 and 19 High Street referred to here by its original name, the 'Big Entry') was taken over in stages, and there was a major overhaul c1960-1973 including panelling and refurnishing of the council chamber by Thompson of Kilburn.

Basement rooms Below the magistrates' rooms the present cellar contains clear evidence of domestic use, having back-to-back fireplaces and sash windows serving two substantial rooms reached via external stone steps from Jerry Croft.

From front range to concert hall

A single-storey linking room or lobby, a 'waiting hall' with south entrance from Jerry Croft, provided access to the large concert room, the fourth element of the Town Hall, its facilities and scale following the example of the great industrial cities, Bradford (St George's Hall, opened in 1853) and Leeds Town Hall opened by Queen Victoria in 1858. Both buildings were intended for concerts and public events and remain an important cultural focus.

The chronology of change for the concert hall and its lobby area includes a substantial re-ordering to designs by Bradford architects Lockwood & Mawson in 1875-78. They provided a more impressive interior to the concert hall, including the higher tier of windows and the elaborate plaster ceiling replaced an earlier and lower roof of 'national-school style'. In the 1890s there were local government changes and the council chamber underwent alterations (not yet fully understood but possibly the date for removal of a cross wall and the present ceiling and fenestration changes, forming the large room we see today).

The 1920s saw changes to the concert hall's originally-open platform where two elaborate doorways had given access to the performers' retiring rooms and the stage transformed into the proscenium-arch theatre we know today. At this time (minimal) modern toilet facilities and electricity were introduced.

Extension and an added storey

The inter-war period also saw the first extension to the building, a response to the need for more court facilities. Mr Jee's original south entrance was dispensed with and three rooms were added in the late 1920s. Two rooms were built on the south side of the 'waiting hall' (now cleaners' and chair stores) and the upper floor was added, with access broken through from the upstairs offices. There may have been a rear staircase.

Rapid change in the 1960s and '70s: Council Chamber and Museum.

The Town Council chamber was transformed with new panelling covering the two original fireplaces, doors and full civic furniture suite, all made by Thompson of Kilburn in 1960, possibly the designs of G.G.Pace. The party wall to next door was broken through and the walls were lined with embossed wallpaper and light oak. Here was a 'modern' feel for the chamber, contrasting with the row of chairmen's photographs and the halberds which were kept perhaps to give a sense of history to the proceedings. The ground floor basement and strong-room doors were disguised with new oak panelling, adding to the uniformity of the interior.

The construction of a Town Hall extension on the north side, parallel to the concert hall and housing a ground-floor supper room and the Craven Museum (see 1973 below), required the demolition of the north wall of the linking range with the Town Hall offices. This provided a wider flat-roofed circulation area and access to the museum staircase, and a 'supper-room' doorway was made in the north wall of the concert hall. This doorway has the segmental pediment and same proportions as the original entrances but the surround lacks the High Victorian decorative details of lion masks and garlands. It is likely that some modification was made to the concert room at this time, reducing mouldings and over-painting.

Plumbing and wall-paper.

Contemporary with this work are the existing public toilets on the south side, and the decorative scheme that includes the high dado rail and trellis-style wall-paper of the entrance hall, stairs, landing, toilet and museum lobbies. The uniformity of this scheme contributes to the loss of any distinction between the varied spaces of the Victorian building.

Nos. 17 and 19 High Street, the 'Big Entry' 1838

The building can be understood as a 'semi-detached' pair of houses and business premises, their entrances opening not off the High Street but from the wide through-passage; the attached north end building, no. 15 (Savage Crangle Solicitors) referred to briefly elsewhere in this report.

A pair of houses with business premises.

Entrance from the High Street was through the wide central passage, access for horse-drawn carts as well as pedestrians. The basic house plans were a mirror pair, of three storeys over cellars and with rear single-storey service rooms. There are differences in room size and use however, and by 1852 the rear yard was almost entirely taken up by the northern property, the home and business premises of Thomas and later William Mitchell, wine merchants, occupiers between 1851 and until after 1881 (see 3.6 below), with their families and usually at least two servants.

Each house had a front and rear ground floor room and, in the rear corner against the passage wall, a staircase rising to the second floor and with under-stair access to the cellar, close to a rear outside door, now reduced to a window in both houses. The stone cellar steps survive, now below trap-door access. The upper floor former landings are now corridor space, and plasterwork and fenestration remain to identify the two stair wells occupied by the first-floor gents' lavatory and the

second floor staff kitchen, otherwise walls have been removed but the lower staircase windows remain.

It was evident from wall surface and skirting board changes that rooms on every floor, including small rooms in the central bay, had fireplaces against the north and south walls. The ground floor fireplaces were flanked by full-height recesses for fitted cupboards or open shelves, several of which retain original moulded frames.

Upper floors were probably heated bedrooms for family members and servants and there are no plastered walls in the extensive roof space to suggest use. Original access to the roof space was not seen but some storage use can be considered as present access is through modern ceiling hatches and there is a high ridge and a clear space between the substantial queen posts on both sides of the full height stone and brick partition wall. The 1852 map shows a crane and substantial buildings in the rear yard, probably warehousing and stables for the Mitchells' wine business, all demolished 1957-58¹.

Two wall safes can be seen, that in no.19 (first floor front) possibly original as before 1861 and after 1881 first John Armistead and then Robert Foster Parker, bank managers, lived and worked at this house. The top floor room at no. 17 has another wall-safe, possibly the document safe installed in the later 1950s.

Fenestration and blocked doorways.

The tall sash windows to the front have distinctive 4-over-8 and 4-over-6 pane frames, the internal mouldings finely cut and with thin irregular glass panes surviving. The size of the thin panes of glass (42cms x 30cms / 17" x 12") lies between those of the smaller traditional Georgian style and the larger mid 19th century 4-pane sashes seen throughout the town. The frame design emphasises the central mullion and higher transom, an antique style given fine detailing with an internal central moulding. Some original window catches remain and internal panelled reveals may be found to be double-folded shutters although hinges and fixings could not be seen. These frames appear to be original to the pair of houses, with differences in the moulding profile in some rooms perhaps reflecting the separate ownerships.

Rear elevation character.

The rear elevation has a very different window pattern and framing style, having large 8- over 12-pane sash frames using the smaller glass panes. Four of these frames survive, some with original catches, although the two former stair windows on the second floor are similar to those on the front. The following development phases can be identified, describing the ground, first and second floors in order:

- A large ground floor window of 8 over 12 lights lit the main rear room in each house, perhaps the kitchen. Each was flanked by doorways, the outer doors were into the rear single-storey service building (scullery / pantry ?) and another main rear house entrance was into the staircase hallway. All the doorways were blocked c1960, three being reduced to windows, but their stone jambs are visible outside. The blocked entrances into the staircase hallways flank the wide central arch which was reduced in width but dressed stones are surviving.
- First floor window frames all replaced but with original stone surrounds remaining: left (no. 19) with small pane frames (moulded glass), c1960 for lavatories, one the former staircase window, lower section blocked; centre plate glass inserted stair window in the blocked former opening ; right former stair window blocked and extractor fan casings set in front;

¹ Large amounts of glass and stoneware debris from bottles and other containers have been found by archaeologists during examination of the rear yard area, later a car park, prior to development, February – March 2013 .

plate glass sash in right window, below which the line of the pitched roof of the service range can be seen.

- Second floor early frames survive: 8-over-12 pane sashes in the outer windows match those to ground floor; the former stair windows have the 8-over-12 frames as those to the frontage but one upper sash has been replaced with a kitchen extractor fan; the central window to the inserted stairwell has 3 panels of plate glass.

Alterations to the Big Entry building.

The new Town Hall building was constructed in 1862 against the south gable of no.19, evidenced by the pitched roof structure and chimney flues. There was no link to the Town Hall until the 1930s and then the plan and structure remained separate, rooms being simply taken over for office space, with no internal access.

Major alterations were made in the late 1950's – 1962 when openings were made in the south gable wall at ground and first floors, the latter providing an entrance into the Council Chamber, with a flight of five steps down into a corridor at the 1838 floor level. Additional structural alterations were made to unify the two houses into a single suite of offices. The 'Big Entry' through-passage entrance was closed and the separate domestic-scale staircases and cellar access removed, replaced by a wide concrete staircase rising through the removed floor levels in the rear centre of the building. While the front elevation remained almost unaltered, (the central doors fixed shut and walled up inside), the rear elevation doorways and fenestration provide clear evidence for the phased changes.

The Craven Museum Annexe

The steel-framed annexe housing a supper room and kitchen on the ground floor and new premises for the Craven Museum, (previously in the public library building across the road), was planned over many years. It was intended originally for a new upper-floor council chamber but a refurbishment of the original chamber was undertaken instead, and modern museum facilities, with an internal herbarium, were built in 1972-'73. The tightly-curving staircase at the west end is a distinctive feature of the view from the back rooms of no.19 High Street as the new building fills its narrow medieval burgage plot.

A plaque at the foot of the stairs from the reception area to the museum records its opening in 1973: 'This annexe was erected jointly by / The Skipton UDC / and the Coulthurst Trust / The Craven Museum was opened by / Mrs Coulthurst O.B.E./ on / 11th December 1973 / The Chairman of Skipton UDC / Miss K Fairey '

5. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

During the development of this business plan and preceding initiatives a number of consultation exercises have been conducted to ascertain the views of Members, organisations, residents and visitors. Each consultation exercise was based on respondents need for the future use of the Town Hall and the services offered within.

The main consultation, conducted in October 2010 indicated that:

- The Town Hall should remain within public ownership;
- 99% of respondents felt the Town Hall should remain available for community use;
- 92 % of respondents said the Museum & Gallery and Tourist Information Centre should be located in the Town Hall;
- Income received from any commercial use of 17 & 19 High Street should be reinvested into the Town Hall.

Further consultation with Members and employees took place in 2013 which demonstrated close similarities to earlier consultation with vibrant community use being a key priority.

The 2013 consultation considered three questions with each respondent asked to provide multiple answers for each question.

When asked what people value about the Town Hall the priority themes identified were:

- The Town Hall is a **community venue** where visitors can socialise, be entertained and learn;
- The Museum, Gallery and Tourist Information Centre should be **located** in the Town Hall;
- The Town Hall is in a **prominent location** on the High Street and should **capitalise on this opportunity**;
- The Town Hall is a key building on the High Street and is **façade and heritage should be conserved**.

When asked about what respondents did not like about the Town Hall two clear themes were identified:

- The building is **underused** with **wasted space**, a poor layout, poor toilets and **limited disabled access**;
- The **cleanliness** and **maintenance** of the building is **poor** with dated decoration.

When asked what activity would make them proud to advocate for a redeveloped Town Hall there were varied responses including:

- A **high quality venue** which takes advantage of the buildings heritage;
- The building being occupied and used to its **full potential**;
- **Integration** of the Museum and Arts Service into the building;
- A high quality **café**;
- Better use of the **Main Hall** and as an **events venue**;
- Using **retail** as a **source of income**.

A detailed evaluation of the consultation undertaken during July 2013 can be found in Appendix B.

Future Consultation

This consultation has been used to develop a series of key principles for moving forward with the Town Hall, these are set out in Section 6. of this Business Plan. Further consultation on this business plan and proposals implemented through Phase 1 will take place in early 2014.

6. KEY PRINCIPLES

Considering the responses from the consultation exercises in Section 5 this business plan presents a series of key principles for the Town Hall. Although broad in their interpretation each principle is designed to guide the project towards a high quality sustainable outcome for the Town Hall with a structured approach to decision making.

The key principles for the redevelopment of Skipton Town Hall are that:

- All activity should lead towards the Town Hall becoming a financially sustainable building.
- All major works should be seen as permanent, to the highest possible standard and sympathetic to the fabric of the building;
- New entrances to the building should be considered, including the isolation of 17 & 19 High Street;
- The Council should deliver a Museum Service;
- The Main Hall should be retained as a multifunctional community events space;
- The Council should establish a benchmark margin for commercial events based on actual costs (initial suggestion of 10%);
- Letting space should be structured in terms of location and rent to maximise income with the most attractive ground floor units commanding the highest realistic rents.

7. SERVICES

Since its construction in 1862 the predominant use for the Town Hall has been for office and administrative accommodation. Since the relocation of many local authority services in 2011 the majority of floor space fronting the High Street is either vacant or underused. The remainder of the building, designed for performances and the Museum is occupied by a number of local authority services including:

- Craven Museum & Gallery;
- Skipton Tourist Information Centre;
- Skipton Town Hall events, heritage fairs and meetings.

The Town Hall, located at the north eastern corner of the High Street, adjacent to the new Albion Place development is in a strong location that will benefit from increased pedestrian footfall, having the potential to become an attraction in its own right. This increased prominence provides the opportunity to develop services and activities that can serve the needs of the residents of Craven and visitors whilst providing commercial opportunities to cover the cost of the building.

At the heart of the redeveloped Town Hall will be an improved Museum, Hall and community facility that will create a valuable asset benefiting the visitor and evening economies for Skipton and the southern Dales.

Within the Town Hall complex and adjacent land there is sufficient vacant space and other opportunities to create a financially viable Town Hall. By using this available space to support commercial activities that complement the quality of the Museum and the Hall it is expected that the overall perception of the Town Hall will start to change and redevelop a strong reputation.

This section of the business plan outlines the development of the services and activities that will operate from the Town Hall in the future. Alterations to the layout and structure of the building can be found within Section 8, restoration and redevelopment.

The services considered within this section are:

Craven Museum & Gallery

A refreshed facility that links the Museum collection with sites of historical interest, visitor attractions and tourism businesses in Craven.

Community Events and Activities

Incorporating the Hall, improved changing facilities and a new community space will enable Skipton residents and groups to hold events and activities that support their communities.

Commercial Events

Maximising the use of the Hall and facilities will provide a high quality venue for music, theatre and markets.

Commercial Opportunities

The Town Hall presents varied opportunities for existing and new space to be let on a commercial basis to create income to subsidise the Town Hall while being complementary to wider activity.

Skipton Town Hall Hub

A critical success factor for the redevelopment of the Town Hall is that the Council modernises the Museum and Tourist Information Centre through the creation of a Hub to further increase their role in the economic and social life of Craven.

To achieve this aim the Hub will:

- Provide a direct link between the hub and places of interest across Craven;
- Educate and entertain residents and visitors about the history of Craven;
- Support tourism industry across Craven;
- Provide a high quality experience for residents and visitors;
- Form the heart of the redeveloped Town Hall;
- Strong research base of the current and future collections;
- Link to communities across Craven.

The creation of the Hub will take the visitor on a journey that will allow them to learn about the heritage of the area and then experience the wider countryside. The Hub brings together Skipton TIC, Craven Museum and partners across the District to provide a Hub for information, education and entertainment regarding the history of the area.

The Hub will provide a direct link between the collections and the places whose stories they tell. It will describe the different aspects that create the heritage of Craven and make links to key sites. This will be achieved by creating information boards, mini museums in pubs and shops and mobile apps that the user can build on their knowledge within the actual location. Key to the concept is that the Hub will also make links where people can stay and eat as well as walk and cycle routes that take in key landmarks that support their learning.

Essential to this approach is a strong research and education facility that brings the collections and education room together to allow further development of the Hub and engages a very wide circle of users including heritage groups and schools.

To deliver the aims of a redeveloped Museum Hub the Council will require external funding support. Early discussions have been held with the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop a Stage 1 application which would include a request for funding to develop a larger scheme. If approved at Stage 1 the Council would use the investment to engage with an appropriate architect and heritage advisor to consult with stakeholders to produce a final bid that creates a facility and service that uses the collection to drive interest in the history that surrounds them.

Place

The Hub

The Hub forms the heart of Skipton Town Hall by bringing together the collection in an imaginative way that encourages people to explore the District to learn more about the heritage of the area. The Hub will cover the following key topics:

- Geology of the Dales;
- Early Humans – Pre-history and Brigantes;
- Roman Craven;
- Medieval Craven – Skipton Castle and drovers roads;
- Industrial Victorian Craven – canal, lead mines, mills;
- The Great Craven Collectors – e.g. Raistrick, Sunderland, Holgate and Roebuck;

Each topic will be linked to spokes for which the Hub will be able to supply accommodation and food providers as well as related activities that would further enhance their learning and enjoyment of an area.

In addition the Hub, as the core of the Town Hall will provide community information and box office services for the building.

The Spokes

The spokes of the Hub will be places of interest that have a clear relationship with one of the key topics. The spokes will be in a range of places including railway stations, pubs or village shops. This could include, for example, walks touring the lead mines of Wharfedale could be accompanied by information boards, a map or leaflet and mobile apps covering the history of the route.



Diagram 1. The Hub and Spoke Model

Possible spokes could include:

Topic	Spoke
Geology of the Dales	Malham Cove
Early Humans	Ingleborough Victoria Cave
Roman Craven	Elslack
Medieval Craven	Skipton Castle
Industrial Victorian Craven	Leeds Liverpool Canal Wharfedale Lead Mines Ribblehead

Promotion

A key element the Hub will be to employ externally funded heritage officers to develop the Hub and spoke model. This will include working directly with communities and young people to encourage increased knowledge of their history and ownership of the Museum.

The connection between the Hub and local facilities has the potential to attract a significant number of visitors. Promotion of the Town Hall will need to be strengthened through promotion across the

north of England using various media and tourism outlets but also using the expertise of Welcome to Yorkshire to reach national media.

Community Events and Activities

Product

The Town Hall Annexe and kitchen are often referred to as “Skipton’s Village Hall”. Along with the Main Hall they provide a valuable asset for local communities to use. Despite the clear strength of the facilities and the opportunities they provide there are some weaknesses that will need to be addressed to provide a high quality venue:

- The changing room facilities are poorly equipped and the layout inadequate to meet male and female changing requirements as well as child protection concerns. An improved facility will increase the number and flexibility of changing facilities and therefore the number of groups able to utilise the Hall.
- The Annexe currently serves the Main Hall but the access to the facility is poor and needs to be more prominent and attractive. This will create attractive entrance to the rear of the building for the Museum and Annexe and allow the independent use of the Main Hall and the Annexe enabling greater flexibility and increased opportunities for communities.
- The Town Hall, both internal and external will need to be refurbished in line with Section 8.

Place

By refurbishing the front entrance to the Town Hall and by increasing the prominence of the rear entrance to the Annexe and kitchen will make the most of the town centre location. Easy access from the High Street car park via the new ginnel created as part of Albion Place and free parking in the evening adds to the attractiveness for community use.

Promotion

The Town Hall has a varied list of users that the Council hopes will continue to use the facilities in the future. As part of the redevelopment new promotional material will be produced that describes the range of facilities available at the Town Hall and circulate to groups across Craven.

Price

The current pricing schedule agreed by the Council will continue to be implemented for community events. The schedule supports the community sector by offering subsidised rates dependent on the proposed use. In many cases this may not cover the actual running cost of the building but makes a meaningful contribution to the Town Hall.

The pricing schedule for the Town Hall will be reviewed as part of the annual fees and charges setting process.

Commercial Events

Product

A key element of the Town Hall consultation was an increase in the diversity and quality of professional events programmed in the building. Although having experience of programming third parties the Council would like to improve this service to ensure the Town Hall has a strong artistic identity and reputation. It is expected that by increasing the number and quality of events and

performances that it raises awareness of the Town Hall regionally, starts to redefine people's perceptions of the Town Hall and create additional income.

To support the Town Hall in the development of a professional programme the Council is seeking to secure external funding to undertake a pilot project based on the appointment of an externally funded freelance creative director. The director would:

- Oversee the creation and delivery of a programme for all spaces of the Town Hall and its environs;
- Deliver an ambitious and distinctive programme that ensures a strong artistic identity, transforms the reputation of Skipton Town Hall, and reflects the vision and values embedded in the Council's plans and strategic documents;
- Identify exciting creative partnerships that could enrich the Town Hall's programme, reputation and reach;
- Work with Town Hall staff to define, prioritise and deliver the Town Hall's audience development objectives, ensuring strong links between artistic quality, programming decisions, audience building priorities and financial sustainability.

As a result of this intervention the Council would like to achieve:

- A new creative vision for Skipton's Town Hall, reinventing this part of the town as an arts and community hub with a strong creative industries identity;
- Increased arts activities and opportunities for engagement with communities;
- Training and development of our current staff, enabling them to programme arts activities, manage the box office, and market to targeted segments of audiences;
- At least 12 new performances in the year of this pilot project;
- The use of at least three parts of the Town Hall for live arts performances and/or workshops;
- The publication of at least one printed programme or other significant marketing push;
- Research into the feasibility and costs of delivering National Theatre Live screening;
- A report re future development opportunities and staff and capital build implications to inform our Development Plan.

A funding application to the Arts Council is being produced. Subject to the approval of funding it is anticipated that the pilot will commence during 2014/15.

Place

The refurbishment of the toilets and the additional changing facilities will allow a better experience for the public and the performers.

The development of complementary activities such as a bar will further support the Town Hall offer to the public. In addition Town Hall promotional material will promote opportunities in Skipton to support the wider evening economy encouraging overnight stays and greater use of local restaurants.

Promotion

It will be the role of the externally funded artistic director to develop an appropriate advertising strategy to reach target audiences.

Price

It will be the role of the artistic director to negotiate whether fees are calculated as a percentage of the ticket sales, as a flat fee or through an alternative approach. To support skills development within the Council the artistic director will work in parallel with Council officers to build capacity for future programmes.

Commercial Opportunities

The Town Hall and associated building currently house areas of vacant space. As part of the vision to establish the Town Hall as a community venue to educate, inspire and entertain the building provides opportunities to incorporate a number of complementary uses, contributing to the sustainability of the building.

As the largest venue in the Town the hospitality services available in the Town Hall are poor. The Town Hall currently offers a basic bar service when events are taking place, based on bottled and canned drinks. There are no opportunities for snacks or meals prior to performances.

Subject to an appropriate layout the Town Hall could feature a café bar facility available seven days a week, including when performances are not taking place. Offering better integration with the Museum, Gallery and TIC new facilities would drive footfall into the building, contribute to the running costs of the building and ultimately sustainability of the Town Hall.

To the upper floor of the Town Hall and 17 & 19 High Street floor space is available to support a variety of uses including office, leisure, retail and community.

To the rear of the Main Hall provides commercial opportunities for a retail unit opposite Marks and Spencer, benefiting from the Albion Place development. To the north of the Annexe, Museum Yard offers opportunities for increased use of the Town Hall's curtilage.

The setts to the western and southern elevation of the Town Hall could accommodate tables to increase the value of commercial space and animate the High Street and Jerry Croft.

Place

The Town Hall, once located on the edge of the High Street retail area will benefit from the Albion Place development, increasing the core retail area beyond the Town Hall. The Town Hall has prominent frontages to the front and side elevations which will receive additional footfall. This will create additional opportunities such as external displays or Museum events etc.

Promotion

Proactive marketing of commercial opportunities has identified significant interest but to maximise these approaches would benefit from the Council seeking involvement of a retail advisor during the refurbishment and redevelopment process.

Price

The income from the commercial space is essential if the Town Hall and Council services are to become financially sustainable. The table below gives an indication of the range of target rents and service fees that are required. The actual rent negotiated for a specific area will depend on a number of factors including the type of use, length and type of lease and condition of the unit.

Table 1. below demonstrates to indicative rental income the Council is likely to receive for space in various areas of the Town Hall.

Area	Rental charge £/ft²	Service Charge £/ft²
Ground Floor	20.00 to 30.00	2.50
First Floor	7.00 to 10.00	2.50
Second Floor	4.00 to 6.00	2.50
Above figures could vary depending on a number of variables that could make up a lease package e.g. lease length, break clauses etc.		

Table 1. Indicative rental values

8. REFURBISHMENT AND REDEVELOPMENT

Following a brief introduction to the current Town Hall, its condition and potential services this section outlines a phased approach to the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Town Hall. The level and certainty of detail within this section varies due to the aspirational nature of later phases. The information presented in this phased programme should be viewed as a long term approach and subject to revision as opportunities arise.

The Town Hall Today

Building Layout

Although commonly referred to as 'Skipton Town Hall' the Town Hall complex is made up of a number of buildings comprising of:

- The Town Hall;
- 17 & 19 High Street;
- The Main Hall;
- The Town Hall Annexe;
- The Town Hall WC.

Floor plans of the Town Hall complex can be found in Appendix C. A description of the historical evolution of the building can be found in Section 4 and Appendix A. Table 2. below details the approximate floor areas of the key rooms within the complex, the table does not include foyers, lobbies or circulation space.

Building	Room	Floor Area	
		ft2	m2
Skipton Town Hall			
	Front right	818	76
	Front left	692	64.3
	Council Chamber	808	75.1
	First Floor Offices	1,476	137.2
	SUB TOTAL	3,794	352.6
17 High Street			
	Ground Floor	526	48.9
	First Floor	584	54.3
	Second Floor	676	62.8
	SUB TOTAL	1,786	166
19 High Street			
	Ground Floor	537	49.9
	First Floor	276	25.6
	Second Floor	489	45.4
	SUB TOTAL	1,302	120.9
Annex			
	Gallery	1,141	106
	Kitchen and Dining Room	1,319	122.5
	Museum	2,771	257.4
	SUB TOTAL	5,231	485.9
Main Hall			
	Main Hall	2,702	251
	Back Stage Rooms	470	43.7
	SUB TOTAL	3,172	294.7
TOTAL		15,285	1,420.1

Table 2. Skipton Town Hall Complex Approximate Floor Areas

The rooms highlighted in grey in Table 2 denote those areas which are either vacant or considered underused. These areas total a floor space of 6,074ft² (564.4m²) or 39.7% of the total floor area.

Building Condition

A Schedule of Condition report was prepared by the Council's Property Officer based on an inspection of the premises between 20th December 2011 and 16th January 2012. The report was based on a visual examination and covers all external and internal parts of the building which were normally and safely accessible without the use of ladders. Fabric and fittings where fixed were not disturbed and therefore the report does not cover elements of the building that could not be seen without disturbance. In addition to the Schedule of Condition a inspection defects report on the roofs has been carried out by Sutcliffe's Construction Ltd. in mid-August 2013.

For the purposes of this Business Plan the Schedule of Condition for the building has been split into distinctive areas as defined above, namely:

- The Town Hall;
- 17 & 19 High Street;
- The Main Hall;
- The Town Hall Annexe;
- The Town Hall WC.

The detailed Schedule of Condition, combining both the Council's and the specific roof inspection report can be found at Appendix D. In summary, the fabric of the building is in reasonable condition. Notwithstanding that there are areas of the building that require cosmetic attention if it is to be maintained to a good standard and be fit for modern day purposes.

A Phased Approach to Refurbishment

The aim of this section is to introduce a phased approach to the refurbishment and redevelopment of Skipton Town Hall. As a long term project with significant capital requirements a phased approach is the most appropriate method of delivery.

A phased delivery method has a number of advantages over a single phase refurbishment including allowing continuity of service, scalable projects that can maximise funding opportunities and be deliverable in the short, medium and long term. This is opposed to a single delivery phase which will require a long design and lead in period, high capital investment, and significant disruption to service delivery.

Although phased there will be inevitable disruption to service delivery but this would be minimized through the approach taken in this Plan allowing for demonstrable improvements to the community facilities and fabric of the building whilst development work continues for a long term project for a new Museum & Gallery.

The phased approach described below can be seen in three distinct phases.

- Initial Works
Necessary to restore the building to a good standard.
- Phase 1
Improving access, facilities and decoration in the Town Hall.
- Phase 2
Aspirational works focusing on the redevelopment of the Museum and Annexe.

The three phases can be seen graphically in Diagram 2.

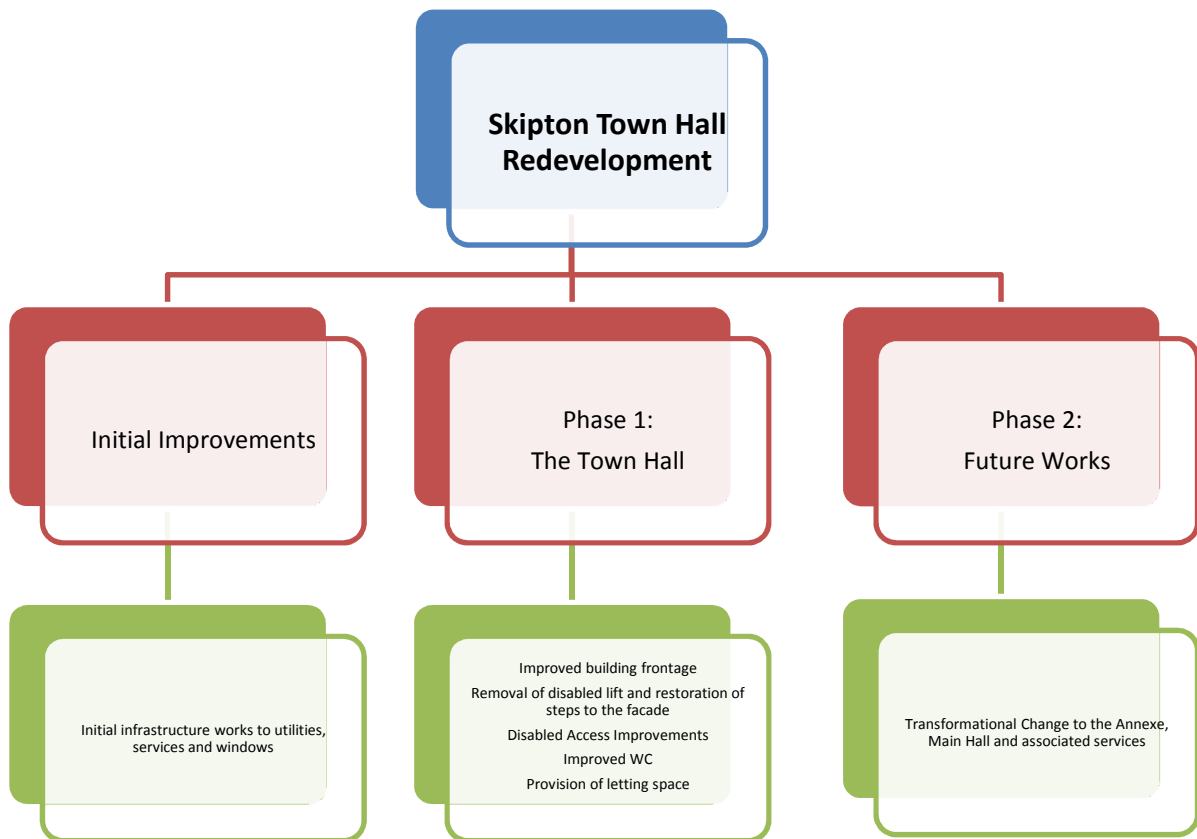


Diagram 2: Skipton Town Hall Refurbishment Phases

Initial Improvements – Complete by the end of March 2014

To enable initial improvements to the Town Hall structure and make the building more attractive for letting purposes the following works will be delivered before the end of March 2014:

- Refurbishment of sash windows on the western and southern elevations including replacing opaque glazing and removal of inappropriate additions, extractor fans and gas flues;
- Potential isolation of 17 and 19 High Street by stopping up the party wall with the Town Hall;
- Reopening the currently blocked entrance to 17/19 High Street.

In addition, this phase will include the improvement and rationalisation of utilities including heating, gas and electricity. This work will be delivered at an appropriate time dependent on other activity within the building. The estimated cost of these works is £70,000.

Phase 1: Refurbishment and Redevelopment – Complete by End of March 2015

Through the phasing process a medium term opportunity to improve access, facilities and decoration could be delivered within the original Town Hall. The scope of works for Phase 1 can be summarised as follows:

- Access improvements including identification of an alternative disabled access;
- Provision of higher quality WC's;
- Installation of a lift to service the Council Chamber and adjacent first floor offices;
- Improving the façade of the building; including removal of the disabled lift

Specifically these works would include:

- Removal of the disabled lift from the front of the Town Hall and restoration of the steps;
- Continued restoration of the façade of Town Hall and 17 & 19 High Street including pointing repairs, stabilising the Town Hall balcony and stonework;
- Installation of an internal lift servicing the first floor of the Town Hall;
- Provision of commercial space at ground and first floor level with the Town Hall;
- Demolition of the existing WC facilities;
- Construction of new WC facilities in a similar location incorporating high quality disabled access and access to the rear of Town Hall;
- Improvements to allow the letting of 17 & 19 High Street.
- Internal decoration and floor coverings to the public facing areas, including the main hall ceiling repair (if necessary) and decoration to allow for removal of protective netting.

The Phase 1 scope of works above requires detailed designs and necessary consents before they can be progressed further. The estimated cost of Phase 1 is £220,000.

Phase 2: Ongoing Works

Beyond the initial works and Phase 1 noted above there are numerous exciting options for the redevelopment of the remainder of the Town Hall. This section provides an indication of the possibilities of what is a vital, yet aspirational Phase 2 development stage that must maintain continuity in the refurbishment and redevelopment process to secure the sustainability of the Town Hall for future generations. It is therefore important that development work for Phase 2 takes place in parallel to delivery of Phase 1.

In a geographic context the areas to be considered through a Phase 2 project include:

- Main Hall;
- Backstage Rooms;
- Annexe;
- Integration with adjoining land.

As noted in Section 7 completion of the Albion Place development provides significant benefits and opportunities to the Town Hall. Museum Yard will create a new opportunity for the building with the existing Annexe becoming a key building in Skipton's public realm. Serious consideration will be given to secure improvement and access to this elevation and the role the existing Annexe plays in a second phase project.

Features to be considered as part of the Phase 2 development include:

- Provision of a new Hub incorporating existing services e.g. Museum, TIC and events;
- Review of catering and café facilities in the Town Hall;
- Provision of additional retail space;
- Animating the ginnel and creating a new rear entrance to the Town Hall;
- Provision of new changing facilities for the Main Hall;
- New public realm improvements to the north of the Annexe.

To ensure momentum in the redevelopment of the Town Hall it is important that the Council continues to identify a viable scheme. To progress work beyond this business plan the Council will work in partnership with an architect and letting agent to advise on space requirements and potential options. This will be carried out in full consultation with Members with a proposal being presented to Council mid-2014.

To deliver this development work it is estimated that a budget of £20,000 will be required from the Council to procure such professional services. To support the development of the Town Hall Hub it would be possible to use this contribution as match funding to secure additional external funding.

9. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

This section of the business plan summarises the financial situation of the Town Hall in terms of capital investment for improvement to Council assets and the associated revenue costs for running services in the building.

Capital Budget

The information in Table 3 below details the capital requirements to improve the condition of the Town Hall. The table has been presented as per the three phased approach detailed in Section 8.

Reference	Item	Indicative Costs
Initial Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Window repair and refurbishment Reopening currently blocked entrance to 17 & 19 High Street; Isolation of 17 & 19 High Street from Town Hall as necessary; Rewiring (may need to slip over to Phase 1 subject to funding availability and / or timing); New heating system (may need to slip over to Phase One subject to funding and / or timing); 	£70,000
Phase 1 Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demolition & rebuilding of existing toilet block; Removal of caretakers office and rear walkway "lean to"; Creation of new disabled access to building; Add new toilet and kitchenette to first floor offices; Removal of platform lift, re-instatement of steps and remedial works to existing steps including new handrails; Installation of new internal lift to first floor offices and Council Chamber; Decoration and re-flooring of common parts; New double door to corner unit; New chair store; Remedial work/improvements to balcony; Remedial work to stonework elevations; 	Estimated Construction Cost £220,000
Phase 2 Works	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New space for the Town Hall Hub; New space for Tourist Information Centre; Improvement works to Annexe including potential new build to house retail to northern elevation; Redevelopment of current back stage rooms; Improvement performance changing spaces; Restoration of the ceiling in the Main Hall New area for community kitchen; Creation of new "main" entrances to building from Museum Yard. 	Preliminary Planning Works £20,000 Indicative Construction Costs £2.5m

Table 3. Phased Redevelopment Costs

Revenue Budget

As detailed in Table 4. below the net cost of running Skipton Town Hall, based on the Town Hall and Museum & TIC budget, is £273,225. As outlined in the vision this document aims to support the principle of making the Town Hall a financially sustainable venue. This section incorporates the commitment made in the Income and Savings Plan 2013/14 – 2016/17 where Skipton Town Hall aims to achieve a saving of £150,000 over the three years commencing in 2014/15.

It should be noted that this budget is indicative and that the budgets for future years will be set through the normal Council revenue budget setting process. In addition the following budget is based on assumptions incorporating the successful delivery of the proposed Phase 1 works outlined in Section 8.

ITEM	2013/14 BUDGET	2014/15 ESTIMATED	2015/16 ESTIMATED	2016/17 ESTIMATED	COMMENTS
EXPENDITURE					
Employees	211,760	203,778	205,816	207,874	Annual increase 1%
Premises	128,910	96,727	89,329	76,559	Annual increase 3%
Transport	350	361	372	383	Annual increase 3%
Supplies and Services	49,745	53,812	55,426	57,089	Annual increase 3%
Total Expenditure	390,765	354,678	350,943	341,905	
INCOME					
Events and Room Hire	90,240	92,947	95,735	98,607	Annual increase 3%
Commercial Letting		16,000	56,000	76,000	
Shop Sales	22,000	27,810	28,644	29,503	Annual increase 3%
Donations	3,500	3,605	3,713	3,824	Annual increase 3%
Misc Income	1,800	1,854	1,910	1,967	Annual increase 3%
Total Income	117,540	142,216	186,002	209,901	
DEFICIT	273,225	212,462	164,941	132,004	

Table 4. Indicative Revenue Budget based on completion of Phase 1

10. TIMESCALES AND MILESTONES

The table below details indicative milestones for the redevelopment of the Town Hall separated into the three proposed phases.

Within each phase a critical path exists which may affect the delivery of each milestone. As individual projects are developed a more detailed milestone table will be produced to monitor activity.

NUMBER	MILESTONE	OUTCOME	INDICATIVE DATE
INITIAL IMPROVEMENTS			
1	Listed Building Consent for Initial Improvements	Consent Secured	November 2013
2	Initial improvements complete	Improved façade and disabled access	March 2014
PHASE 1 WORKS			
1	Business Plan submitted to Policy Committee	Business Plan adopted	November 2013
2	Request for capital investment submitted	Capital investment secured	November 2013
3	Procurement process for architect support completed	Architect procured	December 2013
4	Public Consultation Exercise	Comments received	January 2014
5	Schedule of Works Complete	Proposals agreed	February 2014
6	Request for consents submitted	Planning application valid	March 2014
7	Application presented to Planning Committee	Consents secured	June 2014
8	Capital build procurement complete	Contractor Appointed	August 2014
9	Construction Start	Contractor Onsite	September 2014
10	Construction Complete	Works Complete	March 2015
PHASE 2 WORKS			
1	Business Plan submitted to Policy Committee	Business Plan adopted	November 2013
2	Professional support requirements considered	Professional support identified	December 2013
3	Scope of works considered and consulted	Scope of works agreed	March 2014
4	Submission of HLF Stage 1	HLF Stage 1 Submitted	May 2014
5	Outline plans produced and consulted	Plans produced and consulted	June 2014
6	Consents Secured		November 2014
7	Delivery Phase (including identification of funding)		January 2015 onwards

11. COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

In support of the refurbishment of Skipton Town Hall a Communications Strategy has been established to provide:

- media coverage opportunities are maximised and the Town Hall and its services are promoted to their full potential;
- a detailed action plan, including milestones, to ensure methods of communication are being used to promote and identify potential PR Campaigns.

The aims of the Communication Strategy are to:

Promote the Town Hall

- Inform users/potential users (residents/tourists) of services in the Town Hall;
- Hold open days/consultation evenings to discuss ways forward which benefit both users and Craven District Council;
- Ensure users (residents/tourists) have up-to-date information;
- Promote events within the Town Hall.

Secure the Town Hall's Future

- Increase the number of visitors and organisations using the Town Hall and its facilities.
- Increase the value of visitor spend;
- Promote vacant units for rent in order to enable the community and cultural uses that already exist to continue to be supported;
- Promote hireable areas of the Town Hall stating what it could potentially be used for;
- Promote bids for funding to show the community what Craven District Council are trying to do to restore Skipton Town Hall as vibrant community venue to educate, inspire and entertain;
- Establish a 'friends of Skipton Town Hall' group.

Report Back

- Maintain a good working relationship between Skipton Town Hall, Craven Museum & Gallery and the Tourist Information Centre and the local media to optimise coverage. Direct liaison with the local media is vital – update them on any changes or developments as soon as possible;
- Develop the web page to ensure all relevant information is easily accessible and up-to-date;
- Use Craven District Council's corporate Twitter account to inform people of upcoming events at the Town Hall;
- Develop a publicity schedule to guarantee regular positive coverage of the Town Halls existing services and their importance to the community;
- Inform users of developments and renovation to the building and celebrate achievements/milestones;
- Inform businesses of developments and renovation to the building to promote the Town Halls rentable spaces;

-
- Create a way for potential visitors/audience members to feed their desires for the Town Hall into strategic documents so that the Council can provide evidence of need and support by the community for funding applications.

The full Town Hall Communications Strategy can be found at Appendix E.

12. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Skipton Town Hall Conservation Appraisal;

Appendix B: Consultation Feedback – July 2013;

Appendix C: Current Town Hall Layout Plans;

Appendix D: Schedule of Condition;

Appendix E: Communications Strategy;

Appendix F: Indicative images of potential uses.



If you would like this information in a way which is better for you, please telephone 01756 700600.

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