

Meeting Type: Full Council	Agenda Item: 16
Date of Meeting: 12 th August 2026	
OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL	
Report Author: Samantha Haywood, Locum Clerk/RFO	Purpose: Decision
Title: Office Location	
I received two motions from Members regarding the office relocation. Having read the information, I did not feel it appropriate for them to be on the agenda. I feel there is a lot of information lacking and not enough time at the meeting for this discussion to take place thoroughly and constructively. The reason I say this is, for example, I have received a motion with some supporting information regarding moving to Victoria Hall. Having read the information, I feel there is a lot of information missing and there is no way Council could make an informed decision. Is it accessible? I believe there is no car park? Should we have a venue with accessible parking? The report states that there is wheelchair access but the building is 2-storey so is there accessibility upstairs? Doing a Google search I can see that there is a lift, however, the costs haven't been taken into account. Lifts are renowned for needing a lot of maintenance and can be expensive to maintain so unless council are looking at just being on the ground floor have they considered these costs? How will accessibility be handled if the lift is out of order? If Council were just to be based on the ground floor then what would happen with the upstairs if we leased the building? Is the building well maintained and ready to use or are we likely to have to spend on it? I know Council paid for a new boiler so I assume the heating is OK but what about everything else? Will it be rented or a full repairing lease? If a full repairing lease, then we would need evidence that the building is in a good state of repair before taking it on. The premises is large and if we're the only ones to rent it then what about the cost of utilities? You will all be aware that costs are fluctuating and spiralling for gas and electric. What about cleaning costs? Water costs? Increase in business rates? Increase in insurance etc? I can see huge costs which we have not budgeted for and none of which has been fully costed. Can Council actually afford to lease the building? I believe the building is listed so are there any restrictions that will affect us, for example, if you want to install CCTV are we going to be allowed to do it? Is the building too large and expensive for Council? Would we end up having to let other rooms and have the administration burden for doing that? Do we have the resources to do that? Would the lease allow it? If rented, who would we be sharing the building with? I believe there is a bar on site so assume a licensed premises in which case is that suitable for a town council office? Council cannot hold meetings in a licensed venue if there are non-licensed venues available. The Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12, paragraph 10(1) (as amended by the Licensing Act 2003) states ““A meeting of a council shall not be held in premises which at the time of such a meeting may, by virtue of a premises licence or temporary event notice under the Licensing Act 2003, be used for the supply of alcohol ... except in cases where no other suitable room is available for such a meeting either free of charge or at a reasonable cost.” Would Council be able to un-license the premises? What are the implications of this? I have been informed that RCC said that only the first floor is licensed so would not affect Council holding meetings there, however, the LG Act states ‘venue’ so I would want to check the legal position of this.	

Another concern I have with Victoria Hall is it could be very costly to maintain and actually move into. Do Council want to spend that money on a building we don't own? The trustees have already announced recently that they've closed the building and looking to sell it - despite having retracted on that - we need to ask the question why is it not viable? A 1-year lease has been proposed which means we're going to be going through this exercise again in 8 months' time to review it, or VH giving us notice, so I propose a thorough investigation now to ensure we get it right first time.

If we have a full repairing/full responsibility lease then who will carry out all the health & safety that will be needed on a regular basis e.g. fire alarm checks, fire extinguisher checks, water testing, lift inspections, electrical inspections etc. Can Council afford this? Do they have the resources?

Council need to undertake legal due diligence before any decision is made. I would expect to see details of title/ownership of VH, whether the charity has authority to grant the lease, planning permission/use class, restrictions in the lease, whether legal advice is required before signing etc.

The list just goes on with items I believe need consideration. I strongly believe it needs to be looked at in a lot more detail and fully costed before Council can make a decision.

I also have a motion to move the office to Princess Avenue. I believe there has been security concerns there with a previous tenant having had a few issues so are Council going to be in the same situation as Rol House? I believe there is no security so has CCTV / other security measures been costed? As we own the building is it better to spend council resources on a building we own rather than one we're going to have to rent/lease? CCTV can be expensive. What other security is there? Is the area safe? I see that there is parking. Is there Wi-Fi? Does it need any maintenance or is it ready to move into? Is it fully accessible? etc.

I appreciate the urgent need for Council to relocate and have the offices back open. I fully support that, however, I recommend at the moment is to have an agenda item for Council to agree to form a Task & Finish group to look at this in full detail. This is going to be an expensive exercise for Council and it needs to make the right decision. We don't want to have to keep moving by making the wrong decision.

I would also strongly recommend that members on the Task & Finish group are members who have some relevant experience. I'm not sure of your backgrounds but the group would benefit from people with experience in project management, h&s, surveying, construction etc. I would also propose that we put an advert out to the residents and see if they want to be part of the task & finish group who have some relevant skills. This group could explore all the options and submit a fully detailed costed report to Council for consideration.

I appreciate the urgency of relocating and getting the office open but Council need to make the right decision and they need to be fully informed with all the facts and costs and figures before they make that decision.

Being new to the Council I may have some of this information incorrect on the buildings and am happy to be corrected but it does not negate from the fact that Council need a fully detailed costed report for all options before making a decision.

The group need to look at all other options too e.g. staying at Rol House, are there other premises we could use? Do we have land we could build offices on? etc.

Motions:

MOTION: That Council consider and decide upon creating a Task & Finish Group to look at all the options for the Town Council office, and for them to submit a fully detailed costed report back to Council for consideration. (SH)

MOTION: That Council consider and decide upon the proposed Office Location Task & Finish Group Terms of Reference (should the motion above be carried). (SH)

For completion by the office

<i>In Budget</i> ☐	<i>Spend Authorised</i> ☐	<i>Budget Header:</i>			<i>Amount:</i>
<i>Estimates</i> ☐	<i>Quotes</i> ☐	<i>Emergency Spend</i> ☐	<i>Sole supplier</i> ☐	<i>Specialist</i> ☐	
<i>P.O</i> ☐	<i>Invoice Checked</i> ☐	<i>Reason for spend:</i>			
<i>Legal Power: Local Government Act 1972</i> <i>amend as necessary</i>		<i>Contract Finders</i> ☐	<i>Supplier:</i>		