

Meeting Type: Full Council	Agenda Item: 19
Date of Meeting: 8 th July 2026	

OAKHAM TOWN COUNCIL

Report Author: Melanie Palmer	Purpose: Decision
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Title: Proposed Relocation of Oakham Town Council Offices to The King Centre, Barleythorpe

Purpose of Proposal: To seek Full Council approval to relocate Oakham Town Council's offices from the current premises at Long Row, Oakham, to serviced office accommodation at The King Centre, Barleythorpe.

Background: Oakham Town Council currently operates from offices located on Long Row. While these premises have served the Council for many years, concerns have increasingly arisen regarding their suitability for the Council's current and future operational requirements.

The limitations of the existing accommodation include:

- Restricted office space.
- Limited flexibility for staff and council operations.
- Accessibility challenges for residents and visitors.
- Constraints on modern working practices.
- Limited opportunities for future expansion.
- Concerns regarding staff welfare and operational efficiency.

As a responsible employer and public body, the Council must ensure that its accommodation supports the effective delivery of services whilst meeting modern standards of accessibility, safety and staff wellbeing.

Proposed New Accommodation The King Centre, Barleythorpe, Oakham

An opportunity has arisen to secure serviced office accommodation within The King Centre, a modern business centre located approximately one mile from Oakham Town Centre and approximately three-quarters of a mile from Oakham Railway Station.

The facility offers:

- Ground floor accommodation.
- Manned reception facility.
- Waiting and visitor reception area.
- Bookable meeting room.
- On-site café.
- CCTV coverage.
- Controlled access systems.
- High-speed broadband.
- Parking facilities.

- Professionally managed premises.

Accommodation Options

The Council would need to lease both suites to meet its accommodation requirements. The Casterton Suite is of sufficient size to accommodate a Council Chamber, while the Lyndon Suite could comfortably accommodate three to four workstations, if required.

Both suites are located on the ground floor and in close proximity to one another, providing flexibility and operational convenience, particularly should additional accommodation be needed in the future. They also have their own entrance if required.

The centre offers an exceptionally high-quality working environment throughout, with well-presented, professional facilities that would be highly suitable for the Council's requirements.

Importantly, the combined annual occupancy cost of both suites is no greater than the Council is currently paying for utilities at Long Row. In addition to providing modern, high-quality accommodation, this option presents a potential income-generating opportunity, as the Council Chamber could be made available for external hire when not required for Council meetings. Given the excellent facilities and professional setting, it is considered realistic that room hire could generate in the region of **£5,000–£10,000 per annum**, subject to demand and the adoption of an appropriate charging structure. This additional income could significantly offset the annual occupancy costs of the accommodation while also providing a valuable meeting space for local businesses, community groups and partner organisations.

Lyndon Suite

- 286 sq. ft.
- Rent: £4,000 per annum
- Budgeted Service Charge: £3,575 per annum
- **Total Annual Occupancy Cost: £7,575 plus VAT**

Casterton Suite

- 576 sq. ft.
- Rent: £7,500 per annum
- Budgeted Service Charge: £5,750 per annum
- **Total Annual Occupancy Cost: £13,250 plus VAT**

Combined Annual Occupancy Cost

- **£20,825 plus VAT per annum**

Taking into account the potential room hire income, the **net annual cost to the Council could be reduced to between £10,825 and £15,825 plus VAT**, representing a potentially cost-neutral or cost-saving alternative when compared with the Council's current utility expenditure at Long Row, whilst delivering a modern, flexible and professional working environment.

Included Services

The service charge includes:

- Buildings insurance contribution.
- High-speed broadband.
- Reception services.
- Basic administrative support.
- Heating and lighting.
- Communal cleaning and refuse collection.
- CCTV monitoring.
- Access control systems.
- Linked alarm system.
- Parking facilities.

The Council would only be responsible for its own telephone provision and any specialist requirements not covered by the service charge.

Lease Terms

The landlord proposes:

- A five-year lease.
- Three-year rent review.
- Tenant break option available.
- Internal Repairing and Insuring Lease.
- Lease outside the provisions of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954.
- Three-month rent deposit (including VAT).
- Quarterly rent and service charge payments in advance.

Additional costs include:

- Lease administration fee of £550 plus VAT.
- VAT applicable on rent and service charges.
- Relocation and fit-out costs.

Business rates are separately assessed, and Small Business Rates Relief may be applicable.

Compliance with Safety, Welfare and Accessibility Requirements

I have reviewed the accommodation against the Council's obligations as an employer and public authority.

Following assessment, it is considered that the accommodation satisfies the Council's requirements in respect of:

Staff Safety and Welfare

The King's Centre provides:

- A manned reception area during working hours.
- Controlled access arrangements.
- CCTV coverage.
- Secure working environment.
- Improved facilities for lone workers.
- Modern lighting, heating and ventilation.
- Appropriate welfare facilities.
- A professional and supportive working environment.

These facilities represent a significant improvement upon the current arrangements and provide a safer and more compliant workplace.

Accessibility

The accommodation benefits from:

- Ground floor access.
- Step-free entry.
- Convenient parking.
- Ease of access for visitors with mobility requirements.
- Accessible and safe facilities within a modern business environment.

I am satisfied that the proposed offices provide improved accessibility for residents, staff and councillors and support the Council's commitment to inclusive service delivery.

Location and Accessibility Assessment

Illustrative Location Map

Oakham Town Centre → Oakham Railway Station → The King Centre, Barleythorpe

- Oakham Town Centre to Oakham Railway Station: approximately 0.75 miles.
- Oakham Railway Station to The King Centre: approximately 0.75–1 mile.
- The King's Centre remains closely connected to Oakham and is accessible by foot, cycle, public transport and private vehicle.

Assessment of Location

While The King Centre is situated within Barleythorpe, it lies immediately adjacent to Oakham and forms part of the wider Oakham community and economic area.

The location remains:

- Easily accessible to residents.
- Within close proximity of Oakham town centre.

- Close to Oakham railway station.
- Well connected by road, cycle and pedestrian routes.
- More accessible for visitors due to available parking and ground-floor access.

The proposed relocation would not hinder the Council's ability to perform its statutory functions, engage with residents or represent the interests of the town.

Accordingly, I consider that relocation to The King Centre is **not prejudicial to Oakham Town Council, its residents, its reputation or its ability to deliver services.**

In practical terms, the move is considered operationally beneficial whilst maintaining close geographic links with the town it serves.

Benefits of Relocation

Improved Safety

- Secure managed premises.
- CCTV and monitored access.
- Reception services.
- Safer environment for staff and visitors.

Improved Accessibility

- Ground floor accommodation.
- Better parking provision.
- Easier public access.

Professional Environment

- Modern office facilities.
- Reception and waiting areas.
- Meeting room availability.
- Enhanced public perception.

Operational Efficiency

- Improved working conditions.
- High-speed broadband included.
- Reduced property management responsibilities.
- Future flexibility.

Financial Certainty

The serviced office arrangement incorporates many operational property costs into a predictable annual charge, reducing exposure to unexpected maintenance liabilities.

Risks

Risk	Mitigation
Future increases in service charge	Review lease terms before agreement
Relocation costs	Detailed financial planning
Operational disruption	Planned migration programme
Future accommodation requirements	Flexible suite options and break clause
Public awareness of new location	Communication and signage strategy

Options**Option A – Remain at Long Row****Advantages**

- No immediate relocation costs.
- Continuity of location.

Disadvantages

- Existing accommodation concerns remain unresolved.
- Continued limitations in accessibility.
- Potential future maintenance liabilities.
- Less suitable for modern operational requirements.
- Staff Safety Concerns
- Unsuitable working environment due to poor lighting and inefficient heating during winter months.

Option B – Relocate to The King Centre**Advantages**

- Modern serviced accommodation.
- Improved staff safety and welfare.
- Better accessibility for residents and visitors.
- Professional environment.
- Reception and meeting facilities.
- Reduced property management burden.
- Capacity for future growth.
- Happier Staff.

Disadvantages

- Relocation costs.
- Lease commitment.
- VAT applicable to charges.

Conclusion

Having considered the Council's operational requirements, responsibilities as an employer and commitment to accessible public services, I am satisfied that the accommodation at The King Centre provides a suitable, safe and cost-effective solution for the Council's future needs.

The proposed premises satisfy the Council's requirements regarding:

- Staff health, safety and welfare.
- Public accessibility.
- Security.
- Visitor access.
- Business continuity.
- Professional service delivery.
- Value for money.

Furthermore, the location within Barleythorpe is considered neither detrimental nor prejudicial to Oakham Town Council. The site remains closely connected to Oakham and provides improved accessibility, parking and facilities when compared with the current offices.

The relocation therefore represents an opportunity to secure accommodation that is fit for purpose, accessible, safe and capable of supporting the Council's future requirements.

Proposed Resolution

That Oakham Town Council approves the relocation of its offices from Long Row, Oakham, to serviced office accommodation at The King Centre, Barleythorpe, subject to satisfactory lease terms, confirmation of all associated costs and completion of due diligence; and further delegates authority to the Proper Officer, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of Finance, to finalise and enter into the necessary lease arrangements. It should be noted that there is already considerable interest in the available accommodation at The King Centre, and there is a risk that the opportunity may be lost if a decision is not made within an appropriate timeframe. Suitable office accommodation within Oakham that meets the Council's operational requirements is limited, and alternative options are scarce. The proposed relocation therefore represents a significant opportunity to secure appropriate premises, and timely consideration of this matter is recommended.

For completion by the office

<i>In Budget</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Spend Authorised</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Budget Header: Earmarked/General Reserves?</i>			<i>Amount:</i>
<i>Estimates</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Quotes</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Emergency Spend</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Sole supplier</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Specialist</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>FY:</i>
<i>P.O.</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Invoice Checked</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Reason for spend: Office Relocation</i>			
<i>Legal Power: Local Government Act 1972 sections 111 & 133</i>		<i>Contract Finders</i> <input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Supplier:</i>		

