

Invitation to tender

Trowbridge Town Hall Trust is revising its business plan to deliver activity in the building post-development.

We're looking for an innovative, imaginative, values-led company or individual to work with us on this process.



About Trowbridge Town Hall

Trowbridge Town Hall opened in 1889, dedicated “for the benefit of the inhabitants of the town for ever”. It fast became the centre of the town’s life, serving as a social, cultural and civic venue. It hosted dances, concerts and plays, alongside civic events and royal visits. As late as the 1970s, the Town Hall played host to Rod Stewart and The Who, whilst many couples now celebrating their 50th wedding anniversaries met in the Town Hall’s elegant ballroom.

In 1974, the entire building was converted into a magistrate’s court. The doors were closed to the public. By 2011, the building was unused and the owners – Wiltshire Council – welcomed offers. A group of residents formed a charitable trust to restore the building for public use. It is this charity that now operates the Town Hall and which is issuing this brief.

Over the last decade, various activities have taken place in the building, from theatre performances and art exhibitions to tea dances and yoga classes. The building is run by a

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core team of seven staff with three freelance programmers and curators. It has a turnover of around £300,000.

In the last two years, the organisation has undergone a period of significant change. It has broadened its remit beyond arts, drawing inspiration from the founding dedication to benefit all inhabitants of the town. The building is now home to an independent café, book shop and plastic-free shop, whilst its Old Court has become a dedicated live music venue and its Park View room has become an independent cinema.

The organisation has been developing plans for a multimillion-pound development, focused around restoring the historic ball room.

Our values

Togetherness: we enable activities that bring people into shared physical space

Empathy: we encourage people to see and appreciate other lived experiences

Innovation: we are inspired by the past to improve lives in the future and present

Generosity: we share what is ours

Nurturing: we enable growth, both individually and collectively

Openness: we welcome everyone



About Trowbridge

Trowbridge is a working town. It is also the county town for Wiltshire. It has a rebellious spirit dating back to Magna Carta. Its heyday was during the industrial revolution when it was considered the “Manchester of the West”. Over the last century, the town has gradually declined, and its town centre is now pockmarked by empty shops.

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That said, there is a sense of resurgence in the town with the opening of an Odeon (2013) and a £2 million restoration of the town's museum (2021). There are plans to reorientate the town with culture and leisure replacing retail.

In public consultation, carried out by the Town Hall Trust in 2020, the words most used to describe the town were "run down", "tired" and "potential", whilst people would like their town to be "vibrant", "creative" and "friendly".

About the capital project

Trowbridge Town Hall has been allocated £8.1 million from Wiltshire Council's successful £16.3 million Future High Streets Fund project.

The Town Hall Trust has since set a £2 million fundraising target to match the amount already pledged.

The capital project will fully restore the building, updating services, improving access, and increasing use of the building. It will result in five community spaces, two of which will be used for cultural activity. The building will also accommodate co-workspace, areas for start-up retail and an enhanced café and bar.

Wiltshire Council are the client for the base-build, with the Trust having responsibility for the fit-out. The building will be asset-transferred to the Trust on completion.

The project will complete in the coming 3-4 years with an anticipated 18-month construction period.



Business Plan

The organisation's current operating model is based on three overlapping elements: community, culture, and commerce.

The Town Hall wants to work with specialists to develop a comprehensive business plan that both builds on current activity and on a post-development model created in spring 2020 with consultants Real Ideas.

This new plan would be created with the organisation's staff team and trustees.

The revised business plan would cover the following areas:

Ticket income

The restored Town Hall will have two performance spaces, one with capacity of up to 550 (standing) and 250 (seated), the other with capacity of up to 116 (seated). The business plan will consider programming options covering live music, independent cinema, theatre, comedy, and visual art.

Catering

Our 2020 plan identified catering as a key area of potential income for the organisation. The revised plan should interrogate and flesh out these figures, particularly considering impact of Covid-19 and potential for risk. It should also explore opportunities for subletting.

Room hire

This element would cover workspace, community use, corporate hires, start-up retail and social events (particularly weddings).

Other premises

There are two opportunities for the Town Hall Trust to deliver activity in other locations. These should be explored as specific options that may create operational savings.

Partnerships

There are also two opportunities for partnerships with Higher and Further Education organisations. These should be factored into an operational model, including consideration of risk.

Consumer trends

Consideration should be given to consumer trends post-pandemic, particularly in relation to cultural activity.

Staffing

The plan should cover all staffing including freelancers and contractors.

Building management

Trowbridge Town Hall Trust will be taking on the building post-development in a Community Asset Transfer. It is essential that the Trust gets a detailed understanding of the running and

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maintenance costs of a complicated historic building. It should also consider the staffing required to run the building.

Organisational operations

The plan should cover all areas of operation including communications, fundraising and administration.

Mobilisation

The plan should factor in mobilisation over the first 3-5 years.

Sensitivity analysis

It is essential that the plan covers alternative scenarios should income be lower than expected.

Risk analysis

A detailed analysis of risk is essential, including effective mitigation.

VAT

A consideration of implications of VAT.



Tendering Process

We are looking for a person or organisation to work with us to create this business plan.

It must be bespoke to the circumstances of Trowbridge and of Trowbridge Town Hall Trust.

Tenders should include:

- What attracts you to this opportunity
- How you'll deliver this project, with key milestones
- CVs of those working on the project
- Examples of similar projects
- Cost breakdown (including any expenses)
- References

We envisage this work being completed by the end of March 2022.

To submit, please send your tender to info@trowbridgetownhall.com with the subject line "Business Plan Tender".

Deadline: 17th January 2022

We welcome conversations in advance. If you would like more information, including that not yet in the public domain, please contact David Lockwood (Director) on david@trowbridgetownhall.com.