

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Full Council – 22 February 2018

Capital Improvements - Cemetery and Crematorium

This matter is the responsibility of Councillor Patrick Berry Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Report Author: Chris Hall, Assistant Director - Operational Delivery

1 Executive Summary

This request is to support capital improvement works to the waiting room and toilet facilities within the Chapel complex at Taunton Crematorium, to meet with the increasing demands on this service.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council approves a supplementary estimate of £400,000 to be added to the Capital Programme. £20,000 of this sum to be reallocated from the Capital approval for Cremator brickwork which is now being funded from revenue resources and another £20,000 for the Chapel roof which is no longer required in the Capital Programme. The residual Capital sum of £360,000 to be funded from borrowing.

3 Risk Assessment

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
Failure to keep up with the customer expectations – lose larger service to others – financial impact on service operation	2	4	8
<i>Invest in service and building enhancements as identified in the report</i>	2	2	4
All year weather impact on customers – customer are left waiting in the rain, wind, snow, sun with no protection.	4	3	12
<i>Waiting room extension will mitigate this in most instances</i>	2	2	4
Project resources are not sufficient to deliver the project	4	4	16
<i>The project will be delivered using a combination of the in house team and an appointed project manager, costs included in the bid.</i>	2	3	9
Increasing demand on the facilities cannot be met – reputational damage	4	2	8

<i>Invest in service and building enhancements as identified in the report</i>	2	2	4
Tenders come in higher than the requested budget	4	4	16
<i>Project budget has been established using Quantity Surveyor costs and a contingency (12% of build costs)</i>	2	3	6

4 Background and details of the request

- 4.1 This work is necessary to support the increased volume of people who attend services, and meet their needs in terms of accessible toilet facilities.
- 4.2 The current waiting room does not have the same capacity as the chapel leading to frequent instances of the public having to wait outside all year around. It also leads to mourners from different services co-mingling. The new space will ensure mourners for the next service can wait together inside of the building. It also creates a greater number of accessible toilet facilities within the chapel complex.
- 4.3 This request is greater than just one of convenience for service users, the ability to manage the flow of people through the site is important especially where services are planned back to back, which they often are to meet demand. There are in the region of 2000 services per year and around 40% to 50% of these services cannot be fully accommodated within the waiting room and leave people standing outside. This situation will only get worse unless appropriate action is taken as there is an increasing trend towards greater numbers of mourners at services.
- 4.4 The current layout of the complex leads to mourners waiting outside of the office, this means that any employees, visitors, contractors have to walk through the waiting mourners to access the office.
- 4.5 As identified in the risk section, unless we modernise and update the facilities in line with others in the industry we may start to lose some of the business to others.
- 4.6 The current waiting room is one of the first thinking spaces of the bereavement service and providing the right environment is an essential part of the service that we offer. The current success of the service revolves around having the right environment in addition to the right employees, we need to build on this and accommodate the increasing needs of mourners.
- 4.7 The space is used for families to compose themselves, and meet with other mourners who they may not have seen for some years and have travelled some distance prior to the service commencing. There is no other location onsite for this to take place. The waiting room creates an area of comfort and reverence with a limited refreshment offering.
- 4.8 In order to create the increased capacity necessary, we propose to repurpose areas of the existing building footprint. The plans attached at appendix 1 and 2 show a current and proposed layout for these areas which takes out an existing store and corridor. These changes will nearly double the amount of waiting room space available to the public.

- 4.9 Consideration was given to extending the building footprint through a more traditional extension of the building, however this was decided to be an unnecessary complication and cost as a result of the building being listed. There is also limited space with good access into the chapel available for such an extension.
- 4.10 The newly created space when combined with the current waiting room would better meet with the capacity needs to support the chapel.
- 4.11 The materials in the store will be relocated, as will some of the electrical installations within this area of the building.
- 4.12 The additional resources being requested take account of the need for out of hours working and the provision of temporary toilets and a temporary waiting room. This is necessary to ensure the impacts on services are kept to a minimum.
- 4.13 Whilst the work has yet to be competitively tendered, the design has been drawn up by Stone Partners along with a quantity surveyors assessment, whilst we consider this to be accurate we are aware that a number of recent build projects have resulted in higher contract prices than originally estimated. We have therefore included a greater contingency amount to account for the increasing cost of material and labour.
- 4.14 The build timeline is estimated at 5 months with additional time for tendering.
- 4.15 The bid seeks approval of a total of £360k of additional resources with the service paying back this borrowing from their income. This loan repayment pressure has been included in the Fees and Charges Report and is affordable for the service without placing a new pressure on the MTFP. It is proposed that the service pay back this borrowing at a rate of £36k per annum.
- 4.16 The budget request may appear high when this is fundamentally a reuse of existing space. There are however a number of factors which increase the costs but are considered unavoidable for operational purposes:
- Service to the customers must not be impacted, there is no opportunity to close down whilst these works are underway.
 - Project management resource will be required in the lead up to tendering, during the refurbishment, and for handover. There is also a need for greater employee presence to guide customers to and from the temporary waiting room.
 - There is no spare resource within the service, due to increasing demands and other projects being delivered.
 - The toilets accessed from inside the waiting room need to be relocated to ensure they are all accessible.
 - The toilets available to visitors from outside of the Chapel are original to building and are in need of full refurbishment.
 - Much of the work needs to be undertaken out of hours to limit the impact on the public.
 - A temporary waiting room and toilets will be needed during the build.
 - The store contains a number of electrical installations, security, fire and music that need to be relocated to another area of the building.

- Greater capacity heating and ventilation needs to be installed into the current and new waiting room areas.
- Soundproofing works will be needed to the wall of the office and the wall of the waiting room as they would become connecting walls with the Chapel.
- The project also refurbishes the existing waiting room area.
- An additional 12% of build costs has been included as a contingency within the bid.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

- 5.1 The proposal links to the stated desire to make the best use of our assets, in this case by increasing the accessibility and ensuring the waiting room area will serve the needs of our customers going forward we can “Make better use of our land and property assets; investing in, transferring or selling assets where it makes sense to do so”

6 Finance Implications by Deputy S151 Officer

- 6.1 If approved the S151 will determine the final mix of funding and borrowing at the point of draw down.
- 6.2 The projects would be overseen by the appointment of a temporary Project Manager and by the Bereavement Manager. This cost is included within the budget being requested.
- 6.3 Within the Fees and Charges Report there is a table which identifies additional income of £35,000 per year from Bereavement Services which can be used to finance the borrowing requirements associated with this work.
- 6.4 The recommendation is for an approval to borrow up to £360,000 which would equate to £36k per annum over a 10 year period. With the £35,000 available from the increased fees and charges, the additional £1,000 per annum will need to be found from within existing resources. The Minimum Repayment Provision (MRP) implications are covered by the proposed repayments.
- 6.5 The revenue payback of capital borrowing is affordable based on our current projections but are predicated on the approval of the Fees and Charges increase proposed for the service in 2018/19. Repayment of the borrowing will not reduce the contribution currently made to the Council.
- 6.6 The project is not designed to provide additional income but it would however enhance the facilities, which will in turn provide better surroundings for mourners. The bereavement service makes a significant contribution to the Council budget and the service is important on both a financial and service provision basis.

7 Legal Implications

- 7.1 This is a discretionary service with no requirements for the local authority to provide this function.

8 Environmental Impact Implications

8.1 This proposal seeks to make the best use of the physical environment of the site by repurposing some of the existing building once complete this will improve the feel of the cemetery and crematorium service.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

10 The Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 The approval of the project will lead to a greater number of accessible toilets for the public.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 Social value will be considered as part of the tendering process for contractors.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 The current toilet facilities are in need of improvement, the public will see a much improved facilities and these will be easier to maintain to a higher standard of cleanliness.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 There is no burden placed on the asset management team as a result of this report or Member approval of the recommendations. It is proposed that the improvements are managed within the service.

15 Consultation Implications

15.1 There are no identified implications as a result of this report.

16 Scrutiny comments

16.1 Scrutiny committee considered this report on 13th December 2017 and were supportive of the report progressing unchanged to the Executive.

16.2 A number of questions were raised by Scrutiny Members as follows:

Why would the council take on new debt rather than using New Homes Bonus?

It would not be appropriate to use the NHB funds as these are earmarked for various growth projects already outlined to Full Council.

We would seek a borrowing approval as we have no unallocated capital resources, however dependant on the timing of the approval and draw down this position could vary and we would still look at to internal resources first. The external or internal borrowing would be repaid as set out in the proposal.

What happens to any capital that is underspent?

The committee heard that the money would likely be drawn down in stages to meet with the needs of the project. Should we find ourselves in the position of having funds drawn down that are no longer required then these would be returned to pay off the borrowing early.

Questions were raised as to how we would be able to manage the growth in population and the likely impact that this would have on the provision of additional services.

The Committee heard that there remains some capacity in the service programming and that we are considering options to manage increased service demands, this might include offering services on a Saturday or later into the evening. Even after this additional capacity has been implemented there will come a point where the site can no longer deal with the increasing demand, options for this eventuality are also being thought through now.

It was suggested by the committee that this service is always in need of something and would this be the last request from them?

The author of this report was able to confirm that this is a substantial service which also provided a significant income and surplus to the council each year. As a result there were service enhancements that were required from time to time in order to protect the needs of the community or protect the income that the council relies upon. It was reported that there were other opportunities that were being considered that may bring in new income for the council and that further commercialisation of services was a key principle of transformation to aid with the council's financial position.

17 Executive Comments

17.1 The Executive heard, debated, and supported the report on 11 January 2018.

17.2 It was requested that the report made reference to the S151 making the final decision on the internal / external borrowing mix of funding at the point that the money was to be drawn down. This has been included at 6.1.

Appendices:

1) Existing layout; 2) Proposed layout

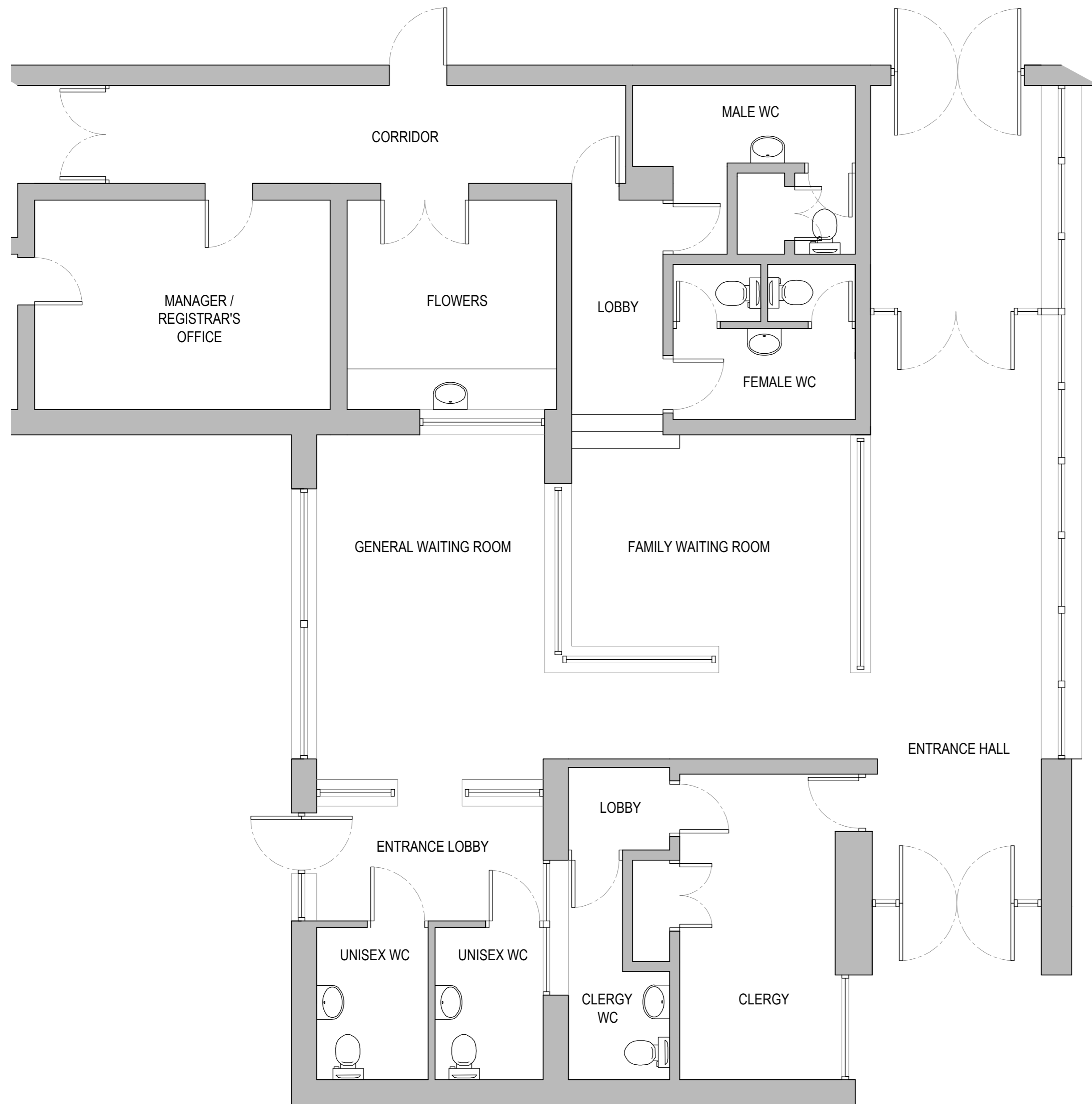
Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny– Yes**
- **Cabinet – Yes**
- **Full Council – Yes**

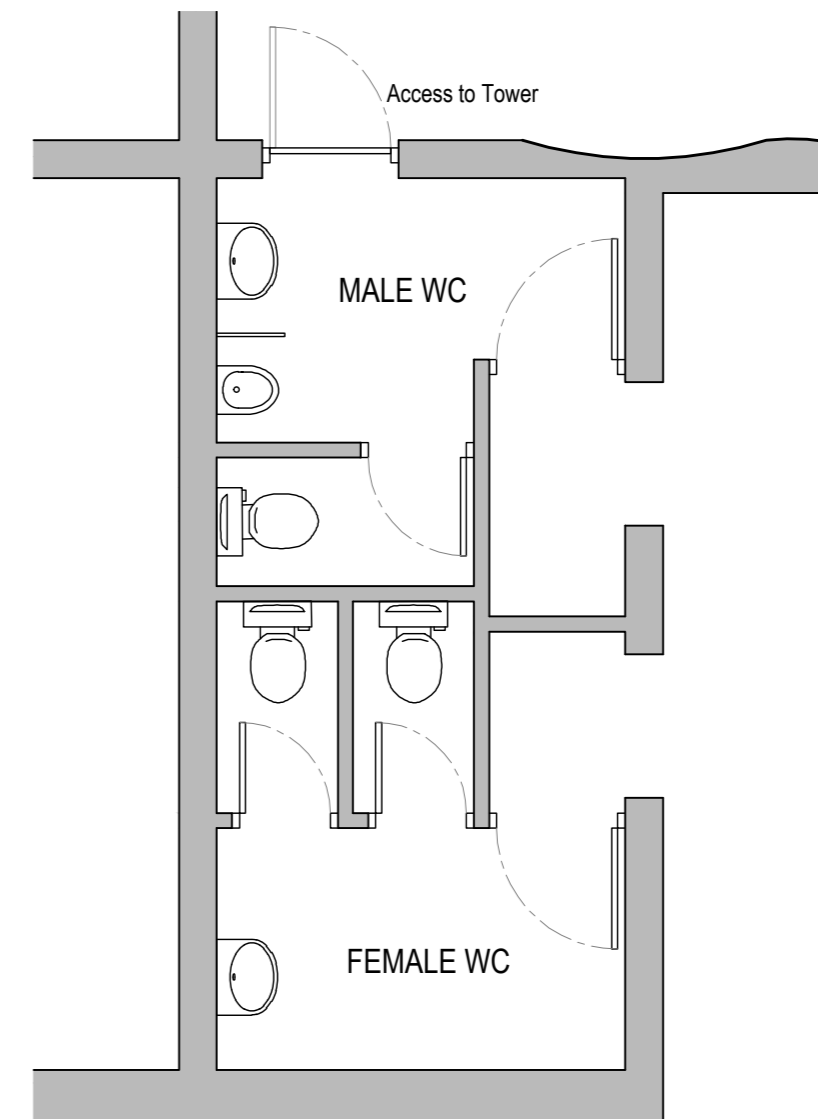
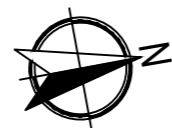
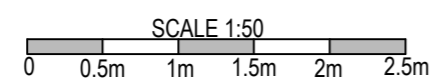
Reporting Frequency: **Once only**

Contact Officers

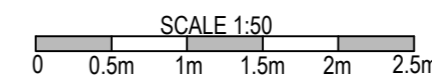
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Existing Part GF Plan
1:50



Existing WC Plan
1:50



NOTE:
Based on archive information
- subject of survey



REVISION	DATE	COMMENT

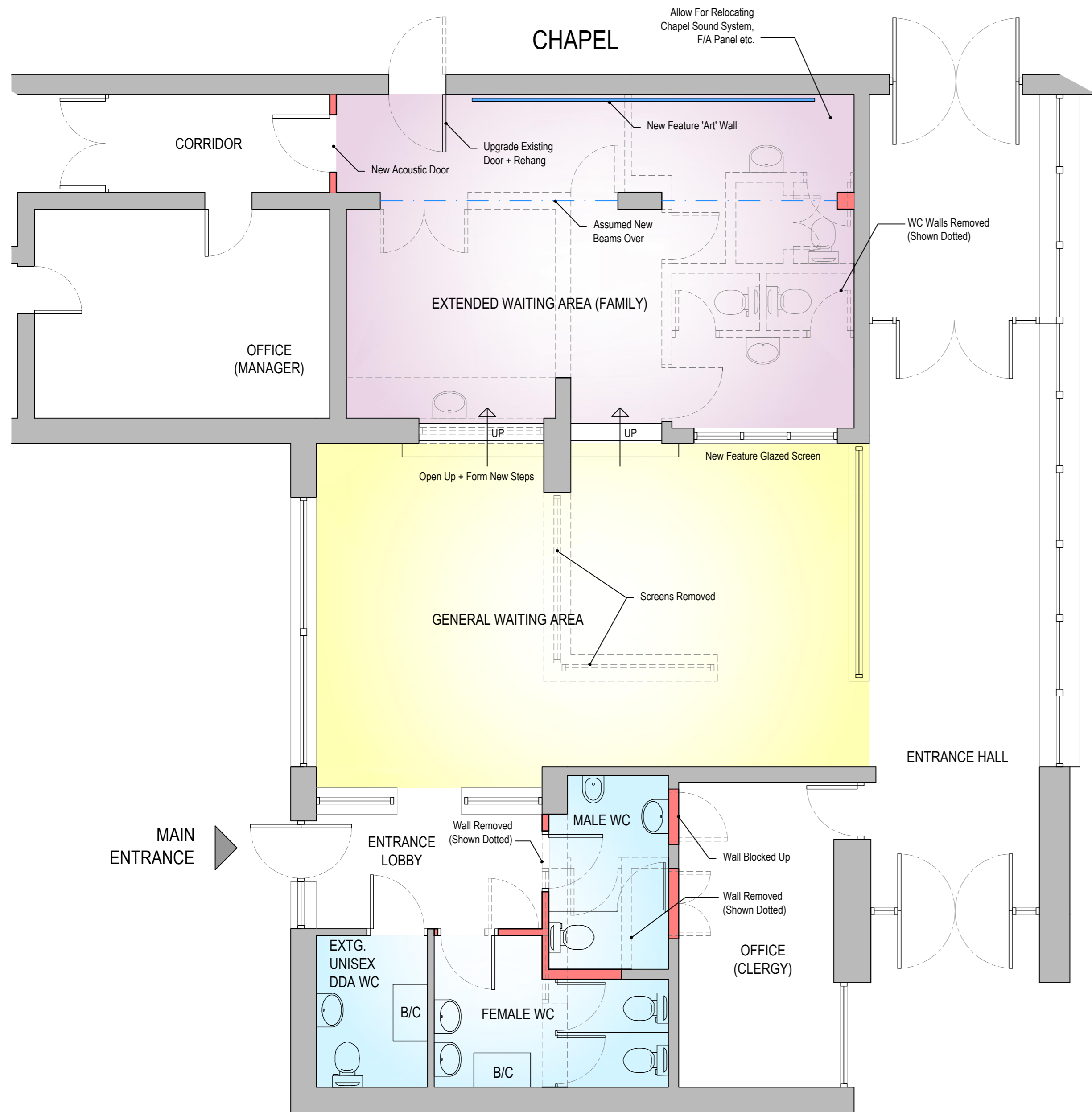
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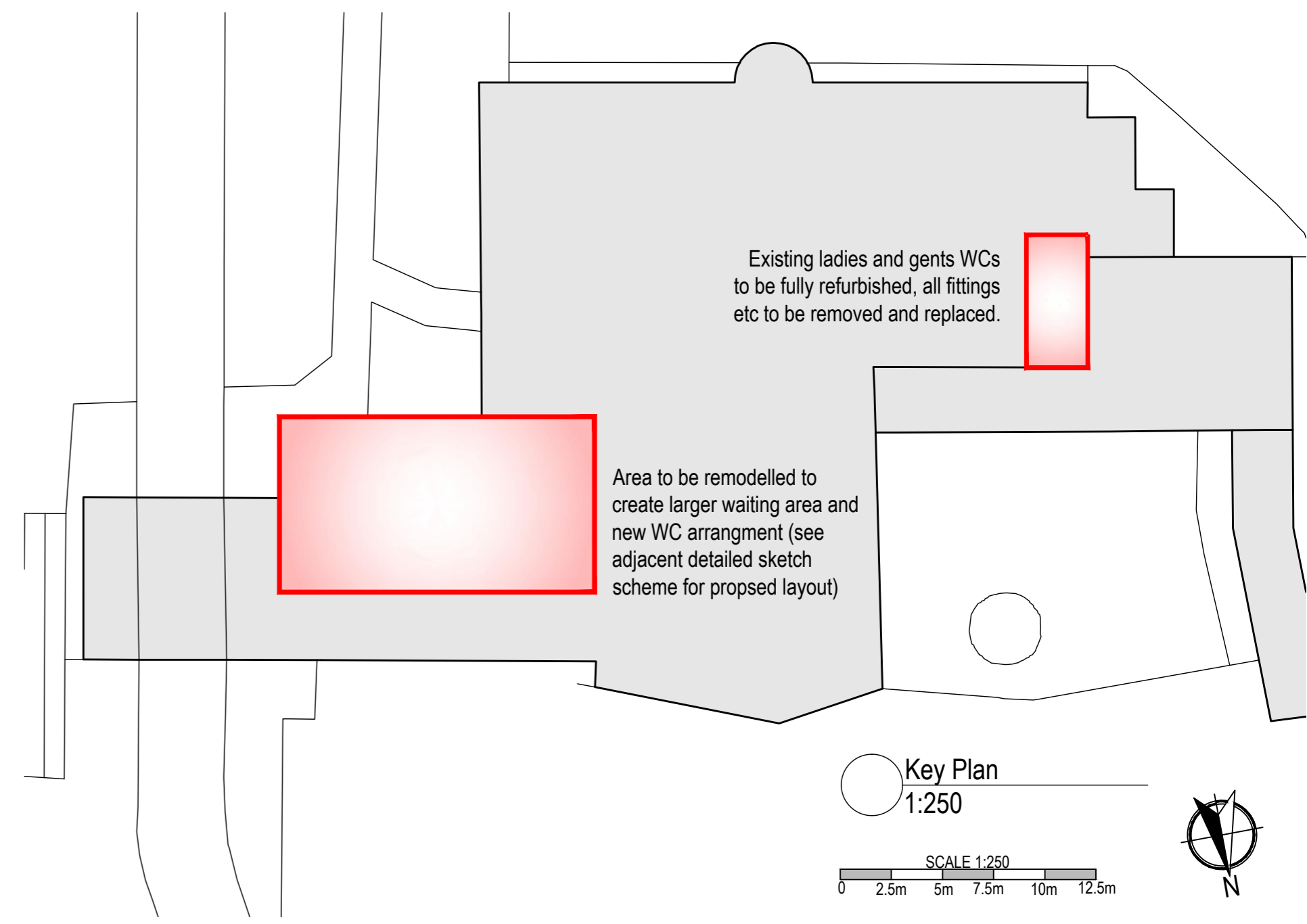
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client	Taunton Deane Borough Council		scale	1:50 @ A2
contract	Taunton Deane Crematorium		date	OCT 17
drawing	Part G.F. Plan as Existing		job no.	3652
			dwg.	S02
			rev.	

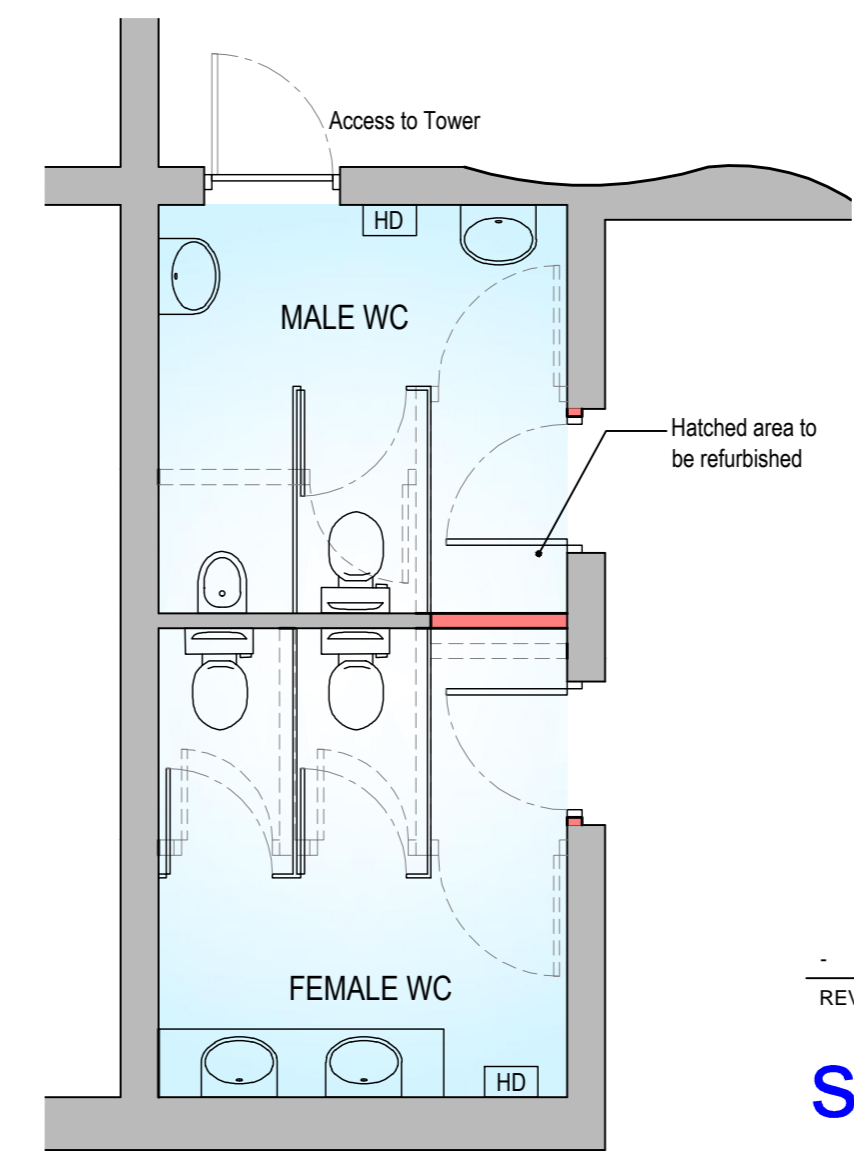
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Proposed Part GF Plan
1:50
SCALE 1:50
0 0.5m 1m 1.5m 2m 2.5m



Key Plan
1:250
SCALE 1:250
0 2.5m 5m 7.5m 10m 12.5m



Proposed WC Plan
1:50
SCALE 1:50
0 0.5m 1m 1.5m 2m 2.5m

NOTE:
Based on archive information
- subject of survey



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			dwg.	20
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