



Bridgwater Town Council

THTD01 - Town Hall Town Deal Consultancy Tender Information and Specification



1. Introduction

This Tender is for the Town Hall Town Deal Consultancy for the period April 2023 to March 2026, a 3-year contract. A RICS Short Form of Consultants Appointment will be required.

The successful consultant will be responsible for acting in the best interests of Bridgwater Town Council (BTC) and working alongside them in the delivery of this project.

A list of requirements is stipulated within the invitation to Tender and will be required as part of the submission of the Tender; failure to submit will invalidate your Tender. You must submit your fixed price on the THTD03 form and all requested documents by noon on Friday 31st March 2023. Late or incomplete Tenders will not be considered. There must not be any markings showing your company name on the envelope and the envelope must be marked 'Town Hall Town Deal Consultancy Tender'.

2. Background

Bridgwater's historic arts and cultural venues will benefit from significant government investment in the next few years following approval of the Bridgwater Town Deal business cases for Bridgwater Arts Centre, Bridgwater Town Hall Theatre and Engine Room 2.0.

These venues represent three of the eleven Bridgwater Town Deal projects, which together are set to bring £23.2million investment into the town.

The overall aim of the Bridgwater Town Deal is to help 'level up' the area and create a vibrant and welcoming town centre. This will be achieved by revitalising the social, cultural, and economic offerings in town centre, as well as unlocking future growth by resolving traffic congestion and protecting the area from tidal flooding.

Bridgwater was chosen as one of 101 towns that would receive investment through the government's Towns Fund scheme as part of its Levelling Up programme. This is a significant step forward in the progress of these projects and is the result of a considerable amount of work over the last two years by the Town Deal Board, Sedgemoor District Council Officers, and consulting teams.

Now work can finally begin on these projects with The Town Hall (home to many events alongside the Panto and Carnival Concerts) getting a long overdue refurbishment and new facilities making it more accessible and securing its future. Once completed, the venue will provide a real boost for Bridgwater. The improved facilities will benefit the people of the town for years to come, as well as bringing more people into the town centre.

Bridgwater Town Hall Theatre is a popular community venue, and the building is also the main offices for BTC, commanding a prominent position on the High Street. The building is Grade II listed with a long history in the governance and cultural life of Bridgwater. Significant work is required to upgrade the quality of the Theatre auditorium, seating and changing rooms / rehearsal facilities, and installation of an improved sound system including a LOOP system for those with hearing difficulties. The installation of a lift will further improve accessibility, and remodelling and refurbishment of unused vacant space in the building will be brought back into use for the local community and social enterprises.

The next step is to appoint a consultant / architect to work with BTC on the project which will include creating technical designs of the proposed works and submitting a detailed planning application and listed building consent application for the works before overseeing the construction phases of the project.

3. Specification

- a) To act as Lead Designer.
- b) To act as Principal Designer under CDM 2015 Regulations.
- c) To function as Contract Administrator.
- d) To submit a pre-application submission to the planning authority.
- e) To prepare & submit full planning and listed building consent applications.
- f) To liaise with all the relevant authorities and stakeholders throughout the project.
- g) To prepare tender & construction drawings.
- h) To submit applications for building control approval.
- i) To tender the project to a number of contractors adhering to BTC procurement procedures.
- j) To administer the construction contract on site.
- k) To formulate a project programme in line with the indicative timeline (THTD05).
- l) To advise on and engage further specialist consultants and initiate surveys to allow the project to progress. Once agreed all of these consultants will be direct appointments by BTC and their costs will be invoiced direct to BTC.
- m) To advise on all planning & building control fees for the project. These fees will be paid by BTC direct to the planning authority.
- n) To enter into a RICS Short Form of Consultants Appointment for the contract.
- o) To follow the guidelines set out in the RIBA Plan of Work and propose a scope of services based on these (THTD06).

4. The Scheme

Transformation of Bridgwater Town Hall, the Theatre, 34 High Street, and 1950's section.

For decades Bridgwater Town Hall has hosted the annual carnival concerts, which brings the greatest number of local residents to its auditorium. The auditorium needs upgrading in terms of the decoration, PA System, and seating arrangements. The seating which must be individually placed, before performances along with a bulky and heavy raised flooring system, is at the end of its lifespan. The auditorium can seat up to 445 people and has the largest theatre style seating capacity in the area. The current seating system only provides seating for 434 people.

Within the project the kitchen / refreshment area, meeting rooms and changing rooms can be improved along with the toilet facilities. The auditorium and meeting rooms are accessible but there needs to be an improvement in the sound system with a LOOP system. Within the project there is the possibility of providing a Tourist Information area, Eco-hub, and workshop spaces for rehearsals and small performances. Further accommodation can also be provided for retail, office units, and residential accommodation. The Town Hall is a central building within the Town Centre, and refurbishment is already underway to the exterior of the town hall to improve the high street appearance. Lift installation for two areas of the building is also required.

Bridgwater Town has a heritage for performance, largely due to different groups, such as the Bridgwater Operatic Society, Bridgwater Pantomime society (est.1957), Local schools, Carnival Concerts, various festivals, Drama and Film.

Redevelopment of the Town Hall would enhance the High Street in Bridgwater. It would also create a place for culture and entertainment, while bringing into use the whole building for enterprise, accommodation, and office space. It will also allow for better connection with the Engine Room, Arts Centre and for both local and Tourist information.

Further accommodation can also be provided for small office units (20-30) and space for meetings, outreach services, drop-in and events accommodation. The Town Hall is a central building within the Town Centre, and refurbishment is needed to the exterior of the town hall to improve the high street appearance. Lift installation for two areas of the building is also required.

Completion of the project will provide significant quality improvement to the Theatre creating more flexibility for events with a wider range of activities being delivered with much greater accessibility for the local community with particular benefits for those with hearing impairment (LOOP system), disability access (Lift installation), those with restricted mobility due to age and visual impairment.

Future running costs can be supported by generating increased income from letting out currently unused space once refurbished, and more income can be generated by bringing derelict areas of the building back to life with versatile spaces for use in a variety of ways. This will safeguard the building for future generations and will reduce the burden on local council taxpayers.

5. Scope

Bridgwater Town Council (BTC) wishes to contract a consultant oversee the refurbishment of unused offices, toilets, and meeting rooms in the 1950s section of the building, including the floors above BOS Café. Along with the Theatre, associated dressing rooms, toilets, foyer, and Charter Hall. We are looking for a complete and costed design for this work.

A measured survey was completed in July 2022 and the floor plans of the building are included in this design brief (THTD02).

Feasibility studies have been undertaken on the options (THTD11, 12, & 13) and the final options agreed and costed by a QS (THTD09)

The major design input is likely to be around interior design, making the best use of the space available, with a focus on:

- Part of the Town Hall: a reception, new lift, refurbishment of meeting room spaces and the creation of an effective flow of movement throughout the building.
- Refurbishment of The Theatre associated dressing rooms, toilets, foyer, and Charter Hall.

We do not expect to alter the exterior of the building and would rather not make significant alterations to the interior, removal, and erection of studding walls, for example, notwithstanding.

BTC is a public sector body, and we have to observe various restrictions and decision-making processes. We therefore expect the successful bidder to understand the challenges of refurbishing a Grade II public sector building in order to deliver a modern resource to be used by the community for at least a generation.

The implementation of the design will be phased as funding becomes available (funding is secured) and the user demands on the Theatre. The cost of the entire capital project should not exceed £4m.

The refurbishment of the Theatre should include as much of the more disruptive part of the works to be completed during quite periods of hire (THTD05).

We also expect serious observation of energy efficiency and energy use.

5.1 Emerging Principles

These emerging principles should be used as a general guide to the design, management and running of the building as it develops.

Accessibility - The building should be accessible to all members of the community, and provide facilities which are easy to use, affordable and well equipped. Particular attention will be paid to providing seamless physical access and spaces which are designed to feel welcoming and inclusive.

Accessibility is more than compliance with Disability Legislation, the design needs to create an environment where all visitors / users feel valued, welcome and can go about their business easily.

5.2 Design Brief

Information and Eco-Hub - The building will function as a pivotal point of information and support for the town. Information will be provided in traditional leaflet and poster formats, on interactive screens, and verbally via the reception staff.

Reception - This will be the point where all visitors enter the building. It must create an environment where everyone feels welcome, comfortable and can easily access information services. The central reception area will incorporate an area where the community can drop in, wait for appointments, or have informal conversations with users of the building.

Building Integrity - Alongside necessary modernisations, retaining the integrity and character of the building is necessary. This building has served the community for over 160 years and we want to restore and celebrate some of its original features including the theatre floor. There is external stonework and existing sash windows that need to be repaired.

Sustainability - Subject to financial limitations and the integrity of the building, the refurbishment project will aim to improve energy efficiency. Sustainability will also be an important consideration when specifying materials, furnishings, and fittings; with priority given to the re-use and up-cycling of existing resources along with using local supply chains where possible.

Damp proofing of the ground floor - dressing rooms and plant room, assessing the cause of the damp, treating the damp, and replacement of any floor timber in poor condition.

Works to be carried out on ceilings that are not structurally sound.

Works to ensure the building is DDA, Fire and Building Regulation compliant.

Installation of a ventilation system for theatre.

Refurbishment works to the unused offices, kitchen, toilets, and meeting rooms in part of Bridgwater Town Hall; the Theatre, associated dressing rooms, toilets, foyer, and Charter Hall.

All works for the heating system including pipe insulation and new environmentally friendly heating system to replace our ageing and environmentally unfriendly gas boilers in all offices, kitchenettes, and breakaway areas.

Technological considerations - To ensure the building is fit for purpose now and in the future the building will need ethernet connections, energy efficient lighting throughout the building, including LED and motion sensor lighting where suitable, and Hearing loops in all areas.

Access to the Building - Ability to access the building 24/7, this might be in specific zones only depending on necessary security measures. Installation of suitable security systems which ensure the functionality of the zones, and installation of a lift for DDA compliance.

6. History

Address: Bridgwater Town Hall, High Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 3AS.

Bridgwater Town Hall consists of a Town Hall of 1823 by Richard Carver, with a rear extension of 1865 by C Knowles, built on the site of a former assize hall. Three stories high, it is in the Georgian style with a stucco frontage and stands on the site of the old assizes court. The 1950's extension is not of special interest.

It is Grade II Listed – Entry 1280140 first listed on 24th March 1950

Listing National Grid Reference ST2968137012

Legacy System No: 373930

Legacy System: LBS

Statutory Address 1 – Town Hall and Municipal Buildings and attached railings, Clare Street

Statutory Address 2 – Town Hall and Municipal Buildings and attached railings, High Street

Address: 34 High Street, Bridgwater, Somerset, TA6 3BL.

A shop with offices above and to the rear, of C18 date, refronted in 1824 by Richard Carver, and with an attached cruck range to the south-west and a cottage to the north-west. The other attached buildings are not of special interest.

It is Grade II Listed – Entry 1197389 first listed on 31st January 1994

Listing National Grid Reference ST2971137019

Legacy System No: 373921

Legacy System: LBS

6.1. Historic England Listing – Bridgwater Town Hall & Municipal Buildings

6.1.1 Reasons for Designation:

Bridgwater Town Hall is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:

Architectural interest: the buildings have well-realised designs by noted architects.

Historical interest: the buildings have a strong link with the civic history of Bridgwater as an administrative centre, clearly dating back to the pre-Victorian era with a Hanoverian Coat of Arms in the Charter Hall; the basements were part of the former Assize Hall of 1720.

Interior: the buildings contain high quality fittings including plasterwork, staircases, and a theatre interior in the 1865 range.

6.1.2 History:

Bridgwater is an historic market town that has grown around a medieval street pattern formed by burgage plots running off the main thoroughfares. A guildhall was recorded in Fore Street in 1354. The town prospered and grew, although it was heavily damaged during the Civil War. In 1720 a new Assize Hall was built on the north portion of the current town hall site, abutting Clare Street (formerly variously known as Penel Orlieu, Horlocke Street and Back Lane).

The Bridgwater Corporation moved to the grand jury room at the Assize Hall in 1822, and the guildhall in Fore Street was demolished soon afterwards. A new building, to accommodate a judge's lodgings, and witness and jury rooms, was built adjoining the Assize Hall, along High Street, in 1823 to the designs of Richard Carver, who also designed attached houses to the east, all in the Regency style. This heralded a period of rebuilding in the town, and several elegant squares and residential streets were constructed in Bridgwater.

In 1823 the Corporation moved into the Carver building, and the complex is shown on a rudimentary town plan of 1835. The Corporation later extended its use of the building when the assizes ceased to be held in the town. In 1865 the former Assize Hall was replaced by a new town hall range designed by Charles Knowles, which became used as a concert hall and theatre by the end of the C19. The 1823 and 1865 town hall buildings, and the outbuildings to the rear of No. 34 High Street, encroached on the burgage plot of the neighbouring buildings (formerly Nos. 38 and 40 High Street), which were rebuilt by Carver in 1824. No. 34 was also refronted at this time in a similar style and established a common building line on High Street. In the 1880s parts of the town hall was used as a police court and a free library and is shown on the First Edition Ordnance Survey Map of 1887. In the C20 there were various upgrades to the facilities in the Town Hall, and a Moderne extension was built on the former site of Nos. 38 and 40 High Street.

6.1.3 Materials:

The 1823 building is constructed of brick with stone dressings to a stucco façade. The 1865 range is constructed of brick, with lower courses of red Wembdon stone to the rear. Both ranges have slate roofs with brick ridge stacks. The cellars are constructed of brick, red Wembdon sandstone and Lias limestone.

6.1.4 Plan:

The 1823 building is rectangular on the Historic Building Listing plan, with the 1865 range an irregular rectangle built behind at an angle, creating a double depth.

6.1.5 Exterior:

The 1823 town hall is in the late-Regency style, and three storeys tall with a symmetrical nine-window range. The five central bays are stepped forward and articulated by pilasters with recessed panels. The two pilasters flanking the centre appear above the cornice and have square panels. The second floor has flat arches to 3/6-pane sash windows; the first floor has moulded archivolt, a continuous impost band and a continuous cill band to semi-circular arched 6/6-pane sashes; the ground floor has flat arches to 6/6-pane sashes, two to the outsides; three to the centre. The ground floor openings are flanked by Tuscan-style porches with elliptical arches inset to the front, and panelled blocks to the centres of the blocking courses and plaques below (the Town Seal to the left, and the Coat of Arms of the former Borough Council of Bridgwater to the right). The cornices to the porches continue as a moulded stringcourse above the ground floor. The doors are double panelled in elliptical recesses, and those to left have octagonal panels to the centre and an overlight above. Those to the right are similar with a leaded overlight with the words TOWN HALL incorporated; the lower sash of the window to the right has coloured leaded glass. A box cornice and plat band are returned to each side. Centrally, below the cornice is painted Bridgwater Town Hall.

The rear extension of 1865 is Venetian Gothic in style and has a limestone plinth, rusticated quoins, and moulded kneelers; there is coursed red sandstone rubble to the ground floor below wide banding. There is Flemish-bond brick and bracketed eaves to the first floor. Seven recesses have gauged brick semi-circular arches with keystones over moulded stone archivolt, which have a continuous moulded impost band. The central five bays have four-pane semi-circular-arched fixed windows and a wide continuous cill band. There are single-storey entrances to each side, the returns of which have steps up to double doors with semi-circular over lights.

6.1.6 Interiors:

The entrance to the right of the 1823 building is panelled below a high dado rail with a foliate frieze. Six-panelled double inner doors have long, glazed panels to the tops, with diagonal glazing bars with hexagonal panes to the centres of the large overlight and side panels, below a coved top to the architrave.

The Charter Hall to the right is panelled, with names of former mayors and other local dignitaries. To the centre is an elliptical arch on moulded pilasters. To the left is a framed Hanoverian Royal Arms, of early-C19 date. In the main hall, ornate double doors lead into the Concert Hall (1865 extension), and have a moulded architrave, panelled reveals, and acanthus leaves to the scrolls of two consoles flanking a foliate panel below the dentilled cornice.

The open-well, open-string staircase to the left of these doors has oak barley-sugar-twist balusters, fretted ends, panelled below, a wreathed handrail and curtail step and cast-iron newel. The stair leads to the former Council Chamber on the first floor. At the top of the stair, a panelled timber partition has decorative leaded glazing to the upper section. The outer vestibule of the Council Chamber has a numbered umbrella rack fixed to the rear of the partition, and coat hooks for councillors fixed to the walls. The Council Chamber retains a moulded cornice to a very high ceiling, two large foliate plaster ceiling roses and three 6-panel doors in moulded frames. A back stairs of 1823 date has stick balusters, slender wreathed handrails and turned newels, very similar to that in No.34 High Street (qv.). The stairwell has a sash window with coloured leaded glass. Some rooms on the second floor have early-C19 fireplaces. There is a substantial king post roof to this range.

6.1.7 The Concert Hall:

The Concert Hall, to the rear, has a balcony to three sides, in the same style as that in the Wesleyan Chapel, King Street (no longer a chapel and has been converted into flats). It has bulging trellis of raspberry canes, fruit and leaves supported by cast-iron columns with acanthus leaf tops. The south-west end of the balcony has been shortened.

The ground floor has pine panelling up to a high dado height, two marble fireplaces on the left-hand wall bearing the town crest and pierced cast-iron skirting panels for the heating system. Above the balcony are five pairs of fluted pilasters to each side and the back, a coved and coffered ceiling with lunettes to the right, and blank semi-circular panels to the left. The stage and proscenium arch are of mid-C20 date. Over the Concert Hall there is a king-post truss roof, with a glazed lantern above. Basements below the 1823 and 1865 ranges are extensive and stand on differing levels with a number of rooms and corridors, and some flagstone flooring. They presumably are in part the remnants of earlier buildings on the site and extend southwards under High Street.

6.1.8 Subsidiary Features:

Tall square-section railings with arrow heads enclose the area between the 1823 porches, and to the right. Below the railings, there are basement windows and access to cellars beneath the High Street.

6.2 Historic England Listing – 34 High Street

6.2.1 Reasons for Designation:

No. 34 High Street, Bridgwater is designated at Grade II for the following principal reasons:
 Architectural interest: the building has fine façade of 1824;
 Date: the building is substantially pre-1840 in date and survives well;
 Rarity: surviving cruck frames are rare, even when much-altered as in this case;
 Interior fittings: some interior fittings of note, principally the rear stairs of 1824, remain.

6.2.2 History:

Bridgwater is an historic market town that has grown around a medieval street pattern formed by burgage plots running off the main thoroughfares. The town prospered and grew, although it was heavily damaged during the Civil War. From an early date, shops with dwellings above were established on High Street, formerly called Great Street, which is located close to the former market square and the parish church.

No. 34 High St, also known as Nos. 34 and 36 High Street, appears to have C15 origins, but has been extensively reordered and extended over a long period, as different commercial uses have been made of the premises. From at least the C17 until c.1800 it served as Noah's Ark Inn, with an associated brewhouse and cider and beer cellars. Ancillary buildings were constructed to the rear, abutting Back Lane. This lane serviced the rear yards of some of High Street's traders. Following the closure of the inn, the buildings were converted to retail use, becoming a saddlery in the mid-C19, by which time there was an attached cottage and stable.

A new Assize Hall had been built in 1720 on Back Lane, formerly Penel Orliou (and Horlocke Street and variants) and now called Clare Street. The Assize Hall was enlarged to the south in 1823, to the designs of Richard Carver, giving it a formal High Street frontage. This expansion was followed, in 1824, by the rebuilding of some neighbouring properties, including No. 34 High Street, also to the designs of Carver. By this time the rear buildings to No. 34 had encroached across into the burgage plot of No. 40. By 1913, sales particulars for No. 34 note the remains of C15 fabric in the structure, as well as rear buildings including a saddlery, stable and cottage. By 1929 the buildings were in the ownership of Bridgwater Corporation and in 1950 rebuilt Nos. 38 and 40 as new town hall offices. The offices extended into the first floor and second floors of Nos. 34 and 36. In the C21, some of the rear outbuildings are not in use, and in 2011 ownership of the buildings has passed from Sedgemoor District Council to Bridgwater Town Council.

6.2.3 Materials:

The frontage is constructed of pale orange brick in Flemish bond. There is stone coping to a C20 red brick parapet, and a narrow cornice returned to the right. The east elevation to Mansion House Lane is red brick with staggered and random Flemish and English bond. The cruck trusses are elm. The roofs are clay pantile.

6.2.4 Plan:

The building is double depth on the Historic Building Listing plan, over three storeys across a three-bay range. The cottage is two storeys, two bays deep, and internally has been opened into the shop.

6.2.5 Exterior:

The principal elevation has flat gauged brick arches to 3/6-pane sash windows to the second floor and 6/9-pane sashes to the first floor. Those to the right are tripartite on both upper

floors. The ground floor has a C20 shop front to the right and right return, with a shop door between. To the left is a wide, gauged brick, segmental-arched recess with moulded stone imposts and contains a gauged flat arch to a former 6/6-pane sash, now a C20 window. There is a door with a tall, gauged, semi-circular brick arch to the right (left-of-centre), which has a semi-circular overlight above a rectangular one. The stack on the right return has a small window to the centre of the top. A board fixed at first-floor level on the right return covers a painted brick advertisement: 'W. H. Smith. Plowman Trundle. Saddler. travelling and Handbags Purses, Dog Collars and Luggage of all descriptions.

There are brick stacks to the gable ends. Attached to the rear of No. 34, the small cottage is rendered and has two window openings to each floor, with modern frames. The upper storey projects forward slightly. Behind the cottage and No. 34 is an open courtyard. The rear exterior walls facing the courtyard are rubble stone and brick, overpainted.

6.2.6 Interiors:

No. 34 has a shop to the right ground floor, with a stone cellar in its front part, accessed by a trapdoor, and is reported to contain a brick oven. The doorway to the left of the shop leads to a hallway with an office to the left. The office has a decorated frieze above a picture rail. The hallway, with a narrow-moulded cornice, leads to an inner hall with a mid-C20 staircase to the left, a sealed doorway to the adjacent shop to the right, and a flagstone corridor down a single step leading to the rear courtyard. A C20 cloakroom to the left has substantial beams, heavily moulded, and neither chamfered nor stopped.

At the north (courtyard) end, the crossbeam stops short of the brick wall, and is cut square. The C20 stairs winds to a half-landing and a doorway through to a room above the beamed C20 cloakroom. The room is c.5m square, consisting of three evenly spaced crucks across two bays. The elm timbers were heavily restored and strengthened in the early C21. The trusses have trenched purlins, square-cut rafters, and curved collars.

The south wall is timber-framed with wattle-and-daub infill to the collar and rebuilt in brick above. The north wall is c.41cm beyond the cruck, which is square cut on the outside edge, and is in brick except for c.1m at the bottom, which is stone. On the first floor is a near full-width room to the south with a cornice.

To the north, above the rear of the shop, is a former Mayor's Parlour with a plasterwork ceiling of four rectangular medallions with scalloped corners and a cornice. From the first floor landing a closed-string staircase rises in a well with square balusters and a curved and moulded handrail. There is scroll work on the strings and a simple turned newel post with an acorn pendant. The stairs are panelled to both sides to the attic landing. Two attic rooms run the length of the building, divided by wooden partitions. There is a gas mantle in the first. The roof comprises C19 king post trusses. The internal wall at parapet level is red brick in English bond.

6.3 Ownership

The section of High Street Bridgwater from no.34 to no.48 freehold is owned by Bridgwater Town Council which includes Bridgwater Town Hall, 34 High Street, and the 1950's section of the building in between (old Town Council offices). Bridgwater Town Council took over ownership from Sedgemoor District Council in 2011.