

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****CABINET****DATE: 24 SEPTEMBER 2019****REPORT OF: MR TIM OLIVER, LEADER OF THE COUNCIL****LEAD OFFICER: MICHAEL COUGHLIN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF TRANSFORMATION, PARTNERSHIPS AND PROSPERITY****SUBJECT: MOVING CLOSER TO RESIDENTS: A WORKFORCE FOR THE FUTURE****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The council is committed to improving the lives and outcomes for people that live, work and study within Surrey, along with protecting and enhancing the built and natural environment, as set out in the Community Vision 2030.

In support of this and as part of the council's ongoing transformation programme, it is making significant cultural and structural changes to the way it operates to benefit residents. In addition, the council is committed to modernising its ways of working as well as recruiting and retaining a workforce fit for the future. This will better enable it to meet residents' needs, expectations and the ever-increasing demands of improvement, transformation and resource constraint, in a rapidly changing policy and political environment.

[Our People Strategy 2021](#), adopted in October 2018, set out our priorities for attention and development and since its adoption much work has been progressed to realise these priorities. This report focuses on the need to accelerate the development of our workforce and new ways of working, as set out in the council's [Organisation Strategy 2019-2023](#).

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

That:

1. A detailed Workforce Strategy be developed by February 2020
2. Officers continue to drive and support a new working culture across the council through increasing the number of staff being enabled to work in new and agile ways, including through investment in Information Technology and training
3. Demonstration exemplar agile office spaces be created in County Hall and in each of the Council's office hubs (Quadrant Court in Woking, Consort House in Redhill and Fairmount House in Leatherhead) by January 2020
4. Measures be put in place to consolidate staff into a smaller area of County Hall, creating a 'Civic Heart' cohort (e.g. those working most closely with democratic and civic functions of the council) over time
5. Officers continue to plan the relocation of staff from County Hall, as explained in paragraph 25 below,
6. Officers continue the search for a new 'Civic Heart' to house the remainder of the staff in suitable, viable and affordable premises.

## REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:

The Community Vision for Surrey in 2030 and the council's own Organisational Strategy envisage a quite different and much improved relationship and connectivity between residents and the council and new, modern ways of working for the council. The widespread introduction of agile working for most staff, creating the opportunity to vacate County Hall and establish a new Civic Heart in Surrey will act to accelerate such changes and facilitate delivering better services for residents.

## DETAILS:

1. The council is committed to creating the conditions for improving the lives and outcomes for the people that live, work and study within Surrey. In support of the Community Vision 2030, the council's priorities and its programme of transformational change taking place across the organisation, the council is committed to modernising its ways of working and recruiting and retaining a workforce that is fit for the future.
2. The council's Organisation Strategy set out how we will transform as a council in order to successfully deliver our contribution to the Community Vision for Surrey in 2030. It outlined the importance of transforming our culture and redesigning how things are done, so that there is greater capacity and capability to succeed now and in the future.
3. Key ambitions within our Organisation Strategy that reference agile and/or flexible working include:

<b>Clean, safe and green communities</b>	Reduce our carbon footprint through rationalisation of our operational and non-operational estates, and supporting new, <b>agile</b> , ways of working across our workforce.
<b>Our Culture</b>	We know from surveys, analysis and member and staff feedback that we need to change the course of our present culture towards one that is <b>agile</b> , outward-looking, collaborative, open and focused.
<b>Our People</b>	As we transform as a council we will have a smaller, highly productive and motivated workforce which is <b>flexible and mobile</b> .
<b>Property</b>	Our strategy will enable our staff to be <b>more mobile and work flexibly</b> , services will be better located and more accessible to residents, and where possible, co-located with district and borough and other community services.
<b>Partnership working</b>	Take a fresh approach to working in partnership – <b>collaborating</b> across organisations and services

### Moving closer to residents

4. Changing and improving our relationship with and 'getting closer' to residents, clients, service users and customers is an underlying principle of the improvements being made at the Council, in terms of better understanding their needs, as well as staff

physically spending more time with them or where they are, e.g. their homes and communities, and/or working out of local, agile offices.

### **Workforce and HR policies**

5. As recognised in our People Strategy, as we transform the council we need a workforce capable of sustaining new ways of working and continuing to deliver improvement and innovation, if we are to achieve our aims and ambition.
6. A summary analysis of the composition of our current workforce identifies the following features which need to be addressed, as part of a more strategic approach:
  - Age profile: skewed towards older staff (just 4.5% under 25 yrs)
  - Insufficiently diverse
  - Recruitment challenges, especially in key roles
  - Retention patterns, with high numbers of staff leaving within their first year
  - Capability gaps in key services
7. Having regard to the above, it is proposed that a Workforce Strategy be produced by January 2020, setting out the activities required to address these issues. The wider roll out of more agile working for more staff will be an important part of the strategy.
8. In comparison to other employers, the council is behind the times with regard to employment terms & conditions, recognition, annual leave and workstyle models. In a competitive labour market, these factors are having a material impact on the council's ability to recruit staff with the required experience and capabilities. In order to support more agile and flexible working and the recruitment of appropriately qualified, experienced and capable staff, our policies, procedures and terms and conditions of employment will be reviewed and modified where necessary.
9. For some staff, such changes will require a fundamental re-thinking of their work routines and content, which will be supported through learning and training programmes. Leaders and managers across the council will have to adapt their behaviours to manage employees who will often not be physically present. Many managers may need to develop new and different styles of leadership to match the new agile working environment. Where necessary training and support for managers will be put in place to enable them to increasingly lead their staff by reference to the delivery of outcomes, rather than by tasks and "presenteeism".

### **Agile working and its wider benefits**

10. Truly agile working means staff being empowered and able to work anywhere, any time and with anyone, to fulfil their duties and responsibilities as effectively and efficiently as possible, to deliver the best outcomes for Surrey people. Our ambition for agile working is set out in Annex A. The collaborative, flexible and mobile nature of agile working – supported by information technologies and virtual working environments – will help drive and support a wider culture change in the way the council conducts its business and serves residents.
11. Initiating more agile ways of working has involved establishing pilot teams of staff trialling agile working, council-wide communication and staff engagement, including a number of 'listening and engagement' staff events. These preparations and plans for greater agile working have assisted in defining discreet workstyles outlining how staff will be able to utilise various agile methods and approaches in their work, be they venue-based, information-centric or community based.

12. The experience to date suggests that flexibility for staff to work in different locations will mean that travel time and distances will be significantly reduced. In turn this provides staff with more time available to be in, work with and more closely support the individuals and communities they serve. It is anticipated that shorter travel and commuting times, more flexible working arrangements for staff and greater choice of when and where they choose to work, alongside improved digital capacity and capabilities, will enable staff to manage their time more effectively with opportunities to improve their work/life balance.
13. With staff needing to travel less, the overall carbon emissions for council business will be reduced; a direct contribution to ensuring “residents live in clean, safe and green communities”. Fewer staff required to commute to a fixed base location will contribute to less traffic on Surrey’s roads contributing to reducing congestion. Agile working for staff can be seen as a key element in contributing to addressing the Climate Emergency that the council declared in July 2019, along with aligning with the Surrey Greener Future agenda.
14. A further positive consequence of those staff currently based at County Hall working closer to residents in and around Surrey, will be that they will be spending money and time in local Surrey shops, restaurants and economies, supporting local businesses and communities.

#### **Information technology in support of an agile workforce**

15. Effective agile working, while much more than just the deployment of mobile devices and/or hot-desking, does rely on a robust and networked information technology infrastructure, with staff comfortable and confident to make the best use of it. To this end the following have already been undertaken and/or put in place:
16. A third-party review of the IT needed to enable agile working has been conducted. This review confirmed that IT infrastructure along with on-going and planned investments will meet the needs of a highly agile workforce.
17. An underpinning strategy for the core corporate IT infrastructure is being implemented during 2019/20-20/21, this will provide the required levels of systems resilience and availability needed to underpin agile working across the Council.
18. All staff devices will be upgraded to Windows 10. Hybrid tablet devices are being rolled out initially to social care staff.
19. An assessment of options to deliver a pan-Council unified communications platform from computers is being undertaken. The objective is to provide a software package that will support agile workspace design by providing telephony, video conferencing and file sharing capabilities.
20. The technical specification for the building IT infrastructure within the Civic Heart will be developed to support agile working ambitions. This builds upon the earlier IT infrastructure audits of the district and borough, and Surrey County Council sites and resulting technical designs.
21. A council-wide programme of IT training will be initiated to ensure staff have a common foundation skill level. This development will be a blend of formal training, drop-in surgeries and on-line videos and guidance notes.

## A 'Civic Heart' in Surrey

22. In the context of the aim for all staff across the council to be supported and enabled to work in an agile way, since January 2019, work has progressed through extensive searches by two property agents, to identify a building in Surrey to which a cohort of staff from County Hall, comprising those that work most closely in support of Members and the democratic procedures and processes of the Council (the 'Civic Heart') could be allocated, as their base office from which to work agilely.
23. The majority of non-Civic Heart staff at County Hall will be allocated to an existing council hub office and enabled to work agilely, reducing the numbers needing to be accommodated at Quadrant Court in Woking, Consort House in Redhill or Fairmount House in Leatherhead. (Certain teams of staff may need to be treated separately for operational reasons).
24. In recent weeks, opportunities to move most staff from County Hall, and some other locations, into a single building have been explored. Despite best endeavours, it has not been possible to identify a suitable and affordable building in Woking or Guildford. The council remains committed to moving from County Hall and working closer to residents in Surrey, and we and our agents are continuing the search for an affordable and suitable 'Civic Heart' building in Guildford and Woking.
25. While the search for a suitable building in Surrey continues, the programme of work to enable and support agile working across the council will continue, encompassing the following elements:
  - Those staff in County Hall forming the Civic Heart cohort will be brought together in County Hall
  - Demonstration/exemplar agile office environments will be set up in County Hall and each Hub by Jan 2020
  - 500 more County Hall staff will be equipped to be agile and allocated to new base offices by June 2020
  - Contact Centre and Orbis services staff will be either agile or in new locations by December 2020
  - Civic Heart cohort of staff to be agile/relocated when we have found suitable premises (meaning County Hall is vacant)
  - Discussions will continue with the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames on the potential future of County Hall.

<b>CONSULTATION:</b>
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26. A programme of communications and engagement with staff has been in place and active since spring 2019, with successful 'listening and engagement' events taking place across the county. Regular updates have been, and will continue to be, shared with staff via Jive blogs, staff roadshows and newsletters as the programme continues and progresses.
27. As the programme develops further detailed analysis and options for HR and IT transformation will be reported to Cabinet. The decisions made will establish when and how members, staff and partners will be consulted and engaged throughout each phase of the delivery plan. Accordingly, a programme of consultation and engagement will continue to be developed and evolve as the programme continues.

## **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

28. The programme of work required to transform the council's working principles and establish an agile workforce ethic will carry some risks. As the programme and the proposed solutions are designed, further clarity on the risks and required mitigations will become evident.
29. An assessment of specific risks and mitigations will be developed as the future model of the council takes shape. A detailed risks and mitigations assessment will be provided with future proposals for Cabinet to consider.

## **FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

30. Revenue and capital funding provision was included in the Full Business Cases agreed by Council for the Agile Working and Moving Closer to Residents programmes. A refresh exercise of the whole transformation programme is currently in train and any amended financial requirements for these programmes will be picked up as part of that exercise.
31. The investment required to drive these improvements will realise gains in staff productivity, efficiency of corporate assets, improved staff wellbeing, contribute towards the Surrey Greener Future agenda, provide a boost to local economies and reduce congestion on Surrey's road network.

## **SECTION 151 OFFICER COMMENTARY**

32. In April 2019 the Cabinet committed to spending £538,000 on project costs necessary to progress the project. To the 24 September 2019, £438,000 of this has been spent. As advised to the Cabinet in April 2019, these costs are being spent at risk, if for any reason, the move does not progress. These costs are not included in the Medium Term Financial Plan and may be funded as transformation expenditure if the project delivers an ongoing revenue saving and therefore complies with the criteria for such funding.
33. The Cabinet has also previously approved a budget of £13.19m for the Agile working project, funded as part of the transformation programme.

## **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS – MONITORING OFFICER**

34. This is an updating report the purpose of which is to advise Cabinet of the ongoing work to enable the Council to modernise its ways of working and establish a new Civic Heart in Surrey. The intention is to utilise the time taken to identify a suitable property to prepare and equip staff to work in an agile way or from alternative council offices. At this point the recommendations to Cabinet do not have any significant legal implications. HR will need to monitor closely any proposals to change staff working conditions and consult appropriately.

## **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY**

35. Moving closer to residents will have positive impacts for the residents and partners that the council serves and works with. The introduction of Agile working across the council and the county will impact on all council staff.

36. As Cabinet is not asked to agree any service changes an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been appended to this report. However, as more detailed plans are explored and developed, the potential impacts to affected staff will be recorded and considered within an appropriate EIA. This will accompany detailed proposals reported to Cabinet throughout the programme's delivery.

**WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

37. Given the commitment and need to modernise our ways of working and create a workforce for the future, in addition to the creation of a Workforce Strategy by February 2020, the proposed programme of work would be rolled-out in four phases:

<b>Phase 1</b>	Concentrate staff in County Hall and exemplar agile office environments set up in County Hall and each Hub completed by Jan 2020
<b>Phase 2</b>	500 more County Hall staff to be equipped to be agile and allocated to new base offices by June 2020
<b>Phase 3</b>	Contact Centre and Orbis services staff to be either agile or in new locations by December 2020
<b>Phase 4</b>	Civic Heart cohort of staff to be agile/relocated as soon as suitable and affordable premises are secured (meaning County Hall is vacant)

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**Contact Officer:**

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**Annexes:**

Annex A – Ambition for agile working

**Sources/background papers:**

- Report to Cabinet, Tuesday 30 April 2019, Moving Closer to Residents
- Organisation Strategy 2019-2023, Surrey County Council
- Our People Strategy 2019-2023, Surrey County Council

## OUR AMBITIONS FOR AGILE WORKING

	<b>Our ambition for 2020 is that...</b>	<b>Our ambition for 2021 and beyond is that...</b>
<b>Working Principles</b>	<p>Sharing of skills, expertise and time is encouraged within services and formally arranged or signed off</p> <p>Performance is assessed on outcomes and behaviours rather than outputs</p> <p>Collaborating around outcomes is more central to how we work, supporting co-delivery of services with partners</p>	<p>Sharing skills, expertise and time outside current job responsibilities and across the organisation becomes more widespread</p> <p>Peer to peer support centres expand and enrich the support offer for staff</p>
<b>Information &amp; Technology</b>	<p>Virtual working is more blended with physical working as staff are supported to make use of the tools available</p> <p>We begin to reduce use of paper as more information and systems become available online</p> <p>Everyone has an SCC device, suited to the workstyle associated with their role, that helps them work in a mobile way</p>	<p>Collaboration in virtual workspaces is organised by outcome, theme or case, rather than service or team.</p> <p>Mobile apps help staff access information and complete tasks while working remotely.</p> <p>Personalised intranet and IT tools provide easy access to tasks and information in one place</p> <p>Virtual working becomes part of standard practice and compliments effective face-to-face time.</p>
<b>Workplaces &amp; Travel</b>	<p>Teams have a home base but staff can also work from any SCC workplace.</p> <p>Movement of staff between buildings, and to new locations, is supported by seamless access to systems.</p> <p>Staff work where they are most efficient and effective.</p>	<p>Travel between locations is optimised, saving time and reducing travel</p> <p>Workplaces are designed for specific activities.</p>