

**CABINET- 30 March 2021**

**COUNTY HALL MOVE AND AGILE PROGRAMME TASK GROUP REPORT**

**Recommendations:**

The Task Group recommends that:

- i. The Resources and Performance Select Committee receive the Council's Office Strategy on an annual basis, ensuring in particular that the carbon neutral targets are achieved;
- ii. The Executive Director of Resources studies the cost and size of office estates in statistically similar authorities and report back to the Resources and Performance Select Committee;
- iii. As the Council, after the pandemic, continues to promote agile working, it also discuss and study how attendance at meetings can still be possible remotely. The Leader to lobby the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for remote meetings to continue and make a case to the relevant Minister, and any other relevant opinion makers, using the County Councils Network or similar organisations as appropriate;
- iv. The Task Group is satisfied with the bidding process for selling Kingston County Hall and that it provides value for money in the current market. However, completion of sale, and the final move out of Kingston County Hall and into Woodhatch Place should continue to be monitored by the Executive Director of Resources, including a settling-in period to ensure as seamless a transition as possible;
- v. The Director of Land and Property continues to work on plans to achieve value for money from the Bittoms car park;
- vi. The Task Group endorses the principle of a bus route between Reigate and/or Redhill and Woodhatch. Before a final decision is taken, Members of the Task Group should be consulted (by email as the Task Group work has now concluded) on the route and frequency. This is to help address transportation concerns and to ensure it is monitored annually as an integral part of the Council's Office Strategy reporting to the Resources and Performance Select Committee by the Executive Director of Resources;
- vii. The lessons from previous strategies similar to the Agile Office Estate Strategy (various past strategies may have been developed but not delivered due to changes in Cabinet membership or staff) are reflected in the Agile Office Estate Strategy;
- viii. It is made clearer in the Agile Office Estate Strategy which buildings could comprise the four hubs, as well as the use of any satellite buildings. The Executive Director of Resources to conduct a review of the overall cost, benefit, and savings by December 2021, including both capital and revenue elements of the Civic Heart move and the four hub arrangements;

- ix. Residents' participation, community engagement, improvement to service standards, and ease of access to Woodhatch Place office buildings, be regularly evaluated by the Corporate Leadership Team/Executive; and
- x. There is a need to encourage discussions with multiple stakeholders to maximize the use of Woodhatch Place.

**Mr Will Forster**

**Vice- Chairman of the Resources and Performance Select Committee**

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**Response:**

- i. The exit from County Hall in Kingston upon Thames was the start of a new approach to the management of our estate. It is our intention that an annual estate performance report will be developed (include monitoring against carbon neutral targets) and shared annually with the Task Group.
- ii. The final Agile Office Strategy to be presented to Cabinet in Q2 will include comparable benchmark data.
- iii. As a Council we do not intend to revert to old ways of working. As an Agile Organisation we will continue to develop our office technology to enable a blend of both virtual and physical attendance in meetings. About formal decision-making meetings the government has disappointingly chosen not to extend the explicit power for remote meetings beyond 7 May 2021. We will submit a response to the announced consultation supporting the ability to hold remote meetings in the future.
- iv. The organisation has several workstreams in place to enable staff relocating to Woodhatch Place and other areas to be orientated into the buildings and that regular Temperature Checks will be undertaken to address any issues that may arise. We will adopt a test and review approach to make sure that we are refining our ways of working and office environment as we accelerate our move to agile working.
- v. Following Cabinet approval in January 2021 officers are preparing the Bittoms site for disposal.
- vi. The provision of enhancements to public transport provision continues to be reviewed, work is ongoing and will be shared with the task group once we have a proposed solution.
- vii. A review of previous reviews has been undertaken with lessons learned incorporated in the approach being taken. The council has made a clear commitment to seeing through the current strategy and will report to the Select Committee on progress.
- viii. It is intended that the final Agile Office Estate Strategy (which will include a full financial case to show cost/ benefits / savings as well as a final model of the remaining estate) will be incorporated in the annual report to the Select Committee.
- ix. The Corporate Leadership Team/Executive will continue to monitor and review the use of our public estate, to ensure it is fit for purpose, accessible and delivers best

value to residents and performs and will report progress in the annual report to the Select Committee.

- x. I am pleased to report that the facility is already supporting the Covid testing and vaccination efforts of the NHS. Further discussions are underway to look at opportunities for collaboration with other public sector and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector bodies that will also be encouraged across all hubs were possible. Updates will be provided once agreements are reached but good progress is being made so far.

**Reply from Mr Tim Oliver  
Leader of the Council  
30 March 2021**

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