

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Monday 25 th June 2018
Report Subject	Move from County Hall to Unity House
Report Author	Chief Officer Strategic Programmes

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Cabinet approved the business case for the move of a range of services and work groups from County Hall to Unity House on 20th March 2018.

This is a partial move and County Hall will still have substantial employee numbers remaining in Phases 1 and 2 for the medium-term.

Since then a range of work has been progressing to ensure this move can take place before the end of the calendar year. This includes building works to Unity House, work with service staff and unions to prepare for the re-location, work to procure an interior designer to complete the fit out of Unity House.

This report focuses on the work with services and staff in preparing for the move, and provides a full update on progress and planned work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note and comment on the progress of work to re-locate a number of services and staff to Unity House.
2	To support the progress of the planned move to Unity House.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND INFORMATION
1.01	The key elements of the move to Unity House reported to Cabinet in March are as follows

	<p>(1) Flintshire County Council have reduced the size of its corporate office accommodation by approximately 43% by floor area (base year 2013/14) and now only occupies Phase 1 and 2 at County Hall. Unity House in Ewloe is vacant and has been the responsibility of the Council for the last twelve months. The costs of just keeping Ewloe Offices unoccupied are in the order of £0.700m per annum.</p> <p>(2) Work to progress the remedial works needed to relocate the workforce into Unity House are being progressed; essentially this may be broken down into a number of areas as set out below:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mechanical and electrical work; - Furniture and interior space planning - Data communications and access systems - Minor building work, the building is generally in very good decorative order; - Wider external works. <p>(3) The Council received a financial sum from the previous tenant as an unconditional dilapidations payment upon expiry of the lease. Although the dilapidations payment does not need to be applied to renovation of the building it is fitting that it should be used in this manner.</p>
1.02	<p>The services identified to move to Unity House are Social Services, Planning and Environment, Education and Contact Centre staff. Appendix 1 details the numbers moving, the desk space required, and the car parking spaces available. The intention is that Unity House will be one of our main office bases and will be designed for front line services, who are not receiving walk in enquiries from members of the public, but who need to meet members of the public and partners by appointment. The building is in in good condition, is light and spacious, and has a good number of meeting rooms. Therefore the intention is not to make significant alterations to the design of the building. The approach to using the building initially is to ensure that there is adequate space for both staff and car parking. Therefore there are some areas of the building that are not fully utilised e.g. basement and third floors, and one part of the ground floor. This will enable us to review how the building operates after these initial moves, and to consider whether we are using the building to its full capacity.</p>
1.03	<p>The main areas of occupation will be the ground and first floors. Social Services have the bulk of the ground floor with one area retained for future consideration of use. Planning and Environment and Education share the first floor. The basement is planned to be used by the contact centre and the third floor provides space for eating and meeting rooms.</p>
1.04	<p>The intention is that the building is a modern office environment but one that is owned and liked by both staff and users. To enable this approach a number of core principles for occupation have been discussed and developed and these are detailed at Appendix 2. These encourage flexible working but also enables services to determine within these principles how they want their own zoned areas to work in detail.</p>
1.05	<p>A major element of the works are designing and fitting out the building. There are some key consideration to be addressed in the final design including: management of noise; confidentiality; use of kitchen areas; storage. We are in the process of appointing the preferred providers for this work and they will work closely with staff and within the principles of occupation to complete this work.</p>

1.06	<p>The key timescales for making the move to Unity House are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commission main building works - completed • Appoint contractors to design and fit out the building - June • Complete main building works - August • Complete design and fit out - September • Staff move to the building – October to December
1.07	<p>To ensure the move is a success additional plans being developed include a clear internal and external communication plan and a travel plan for access to the site. These plans along with the quality of the building and a smooth process for managing the transition from County Hall to Unity House should ensure a high quality office base is developed that makes the Council annual revenue savings.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Financial Implications</p> <p>There are no financial resource implications for the Council arising from this report. Overall this move will make the Council an annual revenue saving and the one off costs of making the move are being contained within existing budgets.</p>
2.02	<p>Human Resource Implications</p> <p>A number of staff are being re-located from County Hall to Unity House. Work is taking place with representatives of the services and unions to ensure this process is owned by staff.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	<p>A regular consultation meeting takes place with service and union representation.</p>

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	<p>Risks detailed below with mitigation.</p> <p>(1) Negative perceptions about the building from staff and users – The building is a good working environment and clear communication and change plans are being put in place to ensure staff and users are aware of the benefits of the building.</p> <p>(2) The move becomes a cost to the Council – The move actually makes the Council an annual revenue saving and the estimated costs of the move are planned to be contained within existing budgets. The savings and expenditure will be monitored on a regular basis to ensure this is the case.</p> <p>(3) Timescales for the move slip from those outlined in this report – Tight management of the project plan is taking place by the project manager and the period for the staff move from October to December can be flexible to</p>

	<p>accommodate minor slippages.</p> <p>(4) Parking and traffic issues become a problem on the site – The numbers of staff moving enable car parking to be sufficient. A travel plan will be developed to enable good access to the site and to address any traffic issues.</p>
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Staff Numbers and Desk Provision</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Principles for Occupation</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Cabinet Report – 20th March 2018.</p> <p>Contact Officers: Ian Bancroft Telephone: 01352 704511 E-mail: ian.bancroft@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Travel Plan – A plan outlining proposals to reduce the reliance on the private car by diverting demand to more sustainable modes of transport.</p>