

CONSTITUTION & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 21 January 2025
Report Subject	Facilities Following Office Rationalisation: Update from Working Group
Report Author	Democratic Services Manager
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Council is moving forward with the redevelopment of the County Hall Campus to address the future needs of the Council. This move has implications for the facilities that will be available for the democratic function of the council.

A small working group from within the Constitution & Democratic Services Committee was formed to consider the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions.

This report provides feedback from the meeting of the group ahead of vacating County Hall.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Committee notes the comments made by the working group in relation to the move from County Hall to Ty Dewi Sant.
2	That the Working Group monitors progress during the transition from County Hall to Ty Dewi Sant, and reports to the June meeting of this Committee.
3	That visits are arranged to Ty Dewi Sant for elected Members ahead of the move, once the construction has been completed – likely in February.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FACILITIES FOLLOWING OFFICE RATIONALISATION UPDATE FROM THE WORKING GROUP REPORT
1.01	A report was presented to this Committee in November relating to the Office Rationalisation Programme and County Hall Campus . The report referenced the proposal to move forward with the transfer of services away from County Hall to alternative locations from 1 st March.
1.02	The need to vacate County Hall by 28th February 2025 had been fixed given the relocation of the Data Centre, after which time there will be no network and/or WiFi facilities at County Hall.
1.03	<p>Vacating County Hall and relocating to an alternative location (i.e. Ty Dewi Sant) will have an impact on the democratic functions of Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • where Council meets, • the provision of a physical location for ‘Member Services’, • provision of physical meeting space(s) for political Groups, • the location (if any) of a Chairman’s room, • storage for Civic memorabilia, • display of artefacts / gifts, • name boards, • Civic pictures (i.e. previous Chairs).
1.04	The working group met to consider facilities available to Members following the relocation, as per paragraph 1.03.
1.05	<p><u>Council Meetings</u></p> <p>The council currently offers meetings in ‘hybrid’ form. County Hall has two rooms that are suitable for hosting ‘hybrid’ Council meetings: the Lord Barry Jones Council Chamber and the Delyn Room.</p> <p>The Delyn Room is used for Committee Meetings and is suitable for up to 30 attendees. The Council Chamber is then used for larger meetings, including Full Council, being able to seat around 100 attendees.</p> <p>At Ty Dewi Sant, meeting room space is at a premium, with only the Auditorium of a suitable size to accommodate meetings with more than 30 physical attendees.</p> <p>The Auditorium will therefore be utilised for <u>all</u> Council’s Committee meetings, including Full Council, and these will continue to be offered as ‘hybrid’.</p> <p>When the construction works have been completed at TDS, appropriate ‘modelling’ and testing will be undertaken for the various room layouts in the Auditorium before a meeting takes place.</p>
1.06	<u>Member Services</u>

	<p>There is an area at County Hall designated for Members to access support from Member Services Officers.</p> <p>Member Services also provides support for the Chairman of Flintshire County Council and is where all of the Civic and ceremonial regalia is stored.</p> <p>Since the pandemic, when there was a move to deliver the services based at County Hall remotely because of adapting to the lockdowns, Member Services has tended to provide support to Members remotely.</p> <p>All Councillors now have access to IT equipment that enables contact with officers without having to visit them in person, including those who work in Member Services, and this arrangement has worked well.</p> <p>How Member Services continues to support elected Members after the move from County Hall will need to be reviewed to ensure it remains 'fit-for-purpose' and meets the ongoing needs of Councillors.</p>
1.07	<p><u>Group Room(s)</u></p> <p>A number of rooms on the first floor at County Hall are reserved for use by the political groups of the council. The number in use at any one time can vary according to the political make up of the council. Indeed, this can change several times during each election cycle.</p> <p>With space at Ty Dewi Sant at a premium, there will not be provision of a physical room for each Group. Where groups require a room, they will be able to reserve a room using the Corporate Room Booking System. Full training will be offered to Members ahead of the move.</p> <p>There is also space around the building that will permit informal gatherings, and will allow 'social' interactions to take place ahead of meetings.</p>
1.08	<p><u>Chairman's Room</u></p> <p>At County Hall, the Chairman's Room is located adjacent to, and with direct access to, the Council Chamber. It is used by the Chairman for private meetings, sealing documents, to prepare ahead of a Full Council, and to retire to during and after meetings.</p> <p>School visits are hosted from the Chairman's Room, and there are a number of display cabinets that contain civic gifts and memorabilia that have been presented to the council by visiting dignitaries.</p> <p>A room at TDS will be provided for the use of the Chair, though the exact location is still to be determined.</p>
1.09	<p><u>Storage</u></p> <p>There is a storage room located in Member Services which is used for maintaining a stock of civic ceremonial regalia and memorabilia. Provision, although limited, will be available at TDS for storage of such items.</p>

1.10	<p><u>Display of artefacts / gifts</u></p> <p>There are a number of display cabinets at County Hall, containing historical artefacts, Civic regalia, and commemorative gifts. All of these will need to be relocated.</p> <p>An inventory of the contents on display and in storage at County Hall been taken and categorised accordingly. The Archives service is currently considering how and where these will be displayed in the future.</p>
1.11	<p><u>Name boards</u></p> <p>There are a number of name boards displayed at County Hall, listing past Chairs etc. of the various iterations of Flintshire County Council.</p> <p>Rather than transfer the physical, cumbersome nameboards, there may be an option to create a 'virtual' nameboard which can then be hosted on the Council's website, and also displayed on a rotating presentation on a screen in the building.</p>
1.12	<p><u>Civic pictures/photographs</u></p> <p>There are a number of images displayed at County Hall, including former Chairman of the Council. All of these will need to be relocated.</p> <p>Alternatively, a 'gallery' of former Chairs could be created and hosted on the Council's website, and also displayed on a rotating presentation on a screen in the building.</p> <p>An inventory of the pictures and photographs on display, and in storage at County Hall will need to be taken and categorised accordingly. Consideration will need to be given to where these will be displayed in the future.</p>
1.13	<p>Paragraph 9.6.8 b) of the Council's Constitution states <i>The Constitution & Democratic Services Committee shall ... Review the adequacy of provision by the authority of staff, accommodation and other resources to discharge Democratic Services functions.</i></p> <p>It is important that provision of facilities for Members is realistic, and meets their needs within the financial constraints the council finds itself in, together with the requirement to ensure asset utilisation is maximised.</p> <p>Recognition needs to be given to the changes and evolution that has taken place in recent years in terms of how the council operates, specifically how meetings are delivered, and the limited space that will be available at other locations, including Ty Dewi Sant.</p> <p>It is therefore proposed that the Working Group formed from the Committee membership continues to monitor developments ahead of the move, but then undertakes a review when the move has taken place, reporting to the meeting of the Committee in June.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	These are documented in the report presented to Cabinet on 15 October 2024.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	An Integrated Impact Assessment will need to be undertaken ahead of the move to TDS.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	<p>Reports have been presented at Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee (CROSC) and Cabinet.</p> <p>Further reports will be presented to CROSC and Cabinet as appropriate.</p>

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Corporate Asset Management Plan, as presented to Cabinet in October 2022, available online.</p> <p>CROSC Report: Office Rationalisation Programme and County Hall Campus</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Steven Goodrum, Democratic Services Manager Telephone: 01352 702320 E-mail: Steven.Goodrum@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Asset Management Plan - A plan maintained by an authority of the condition and suitability of its assets, updated regularly and utilised to assess future capital needs.

	<p>Hybrid Meeting – A meeting where some attendees access the meeting remotely from a different location whilst others attend the physical location in person.</p>
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