

## **SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee      **DATE:** 11<sup>th</sup> October 2011

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### **PART I** **FOR COMMENT AND CONSIDERATION**

#### **ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY UPDATE**

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

1.1 This report highlights the progress to date in implementing the Council wide Accommodation Strategy

##### **2 Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action**

2.1 The Committee is requested to note the following:

- a) The progress made to date and the plans to complete this phase of the Councils Accommodation Strategy.

##### **3 Community Strategy Priorities**

###### **3.1 A Cleaner, Greener place to Live, Work and Play**

This strategy will improve the working environment of our employees, reduce the Councils carbon footprint and provide a sizable site for future development.

###### **3.2 Prosperity for All**

The long term reduction in reducing the costs for office accommodation will have financial benefits to SBC allowing funds to be used on providing services to residents.

##### **4. Other Implications**

###### **(a) Financial**

All works relating to office moves refurbishment and are fully funded from the approved capital programme and the current year's revenue budget.

(b) Risk Management

<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Risk/Threat/Opportunity</i>	<i>Mitigation(s)</i>
The progress made to date and the plans to complete this phase of the Councils Accommodation Strategy.	Failure to meet office move timescales impacts on the MTFs savings target	Project Team in place with representatives from all Directorates and regular reports to CMT
That the Town Hall is decommissioned as soon as possible to ensure the savings identified within the Medium Term Financial Strategy are delivered	Physically relocating services always presents some risk in terms of continuity of service	A move plan is produced which will identify all the services and facilities that each service needs to have in place to be operational.
	The opportunity to introduce new ways of working and service improvements, including use of IT to improve business and service outcomes	Management will have the opportunity to review current working practices and deliver more efficient service by reviewing their current operating models and processes
	Keeping staff and residents informed of service moves etc	Communications plan to be developed to provide staff updates on a regular basis via briefings and SBC insight.

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

There are no Legal or Human Rights Act Implications within this report.

(d) Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)

Individual services will need to consider the potential impact of the accommodation move on the staff affected, and in particular the impact arising from race, gender or disability. While this report does not propose any reduction in staff numbers, working practices will inevitably require some adaptation as the intention is to relocate services to SMP and introduce new ways of working and service delivery, and the impact of these longer term changes will need to be assessed when the details become firmer and any proposals are brought forward. Services and staff to be moved will be allocated space within SMP on the basis of the service needs and customer access. A detailed impact assessment will need to be undertaken by each service. Any needs in terms of religion, age or sexual orientation will also be identified and reasonable provision made to meet those needs.

There will be a need to meet in terms of car parking and spaces will be allocated in accordance with the already agreed criteria which take into account needs such as disability, security and work patterns.

(e) Workforce

Staff and staff side representatives are being kept informed of dates and procedures as the office moves are planned.

**5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 As part of our Medium Term Financial and Planning for the Future Strategies, the Corporate Management Team, together with Members, has made the decision to demolish the 1970s part of the Town Hall in order to make significant financial savings and at the same time improve services to residents. The cost saving will derive from savings on business rates, energy, cleaning and other general running costs and this is estimated minimum £633,000 per annum saving. The timing of the works programme is critical to secure these savings in line with budget requirements.
- 5.2 Over 500 staff who were located within the Town Hall needed to be re-accommodated in other Council buildings, the majority within St Martins Place.
- 5.3 A review of the space and buildings that can be better utilised has been undertaken. Buildings assessed were:-
- St Martins Place
  - Landmark Place
  - Airways House
  - Old Town Hall
  - The Centre, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor.
- 5.4 Locations of all teams were reviewed not just those that need to move out of the Town Hall, but also the need to improve customer access to our services.
- 5.5 In order to establish all Directorate's requirements, each member of the Task & Finish Group were asked to coordinate collection of data for their area, specifying number of desks required from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, any preferences and their needs to be near other teams and in a building which provides good public delivery.
- 5.6 Once all the above information was received, Facilities Management thoroughly examined requirements and produced recommendations. All information received from each department was incorporated into one spreadsheet. These requirements where possible have been accommodated.
- 5.7 Other matters that were taken into consideration were:
- Housing Services returning to SBC management
  - The creation of the Transactional Services Hub

It was therefore recommended to CMT that the new Housing Services be relocated to The Centre which has a long term lease in place regarding the lease.

- 5.8 We currently have a 15 month lease on Airways House which fits in with our plans to develop the Transactional Services Hub with an external service provider, who may chose to relocate elsewhere within the town as the business has potential

to expand. This provided immediate financial benefit to the HRA as the liabilities of Airways House was to be shared.

5.9 To date the following progress has being made:

- St Martins Place refurbishment completed May December 2011
- The Centre 2nd Floor fully refurbished and completed January 2011
- Airways House refurbishment completed January 2011

All these phases of work have being completed on time and to a high specification.

5.10 Office Moves

A detailed office moves schedule was developed by Facilities to assist with the the relocation of the various teams with the Town Hall annex completely vacated by the end of May 2011, allowing demolition to commence on time.

5.11 Outstanding accommodation issues and further office moves

The vast majority of staff have already being decanted from the Town Hall site as planned, however there are a few services that are due to move over the next few weeks with a view of all services relocated by the end of December 2011. These services or functions include:

- Democratic Services
- Unions Offices
- Printing Services
- Occupational Health
- Mayors Secretary
- Mayors Parlour
- Learning & Cultural Engagement Team

5.12 Other outstanding issues currently being addressed include:

- A review the reception arrangements at St Martins Place
- Provision of additional public meeting rooms at Landmark Place
- Improvements to the CCTV room (to remain in Town Hall)
- Storage requirements
- Increasing home working opportunities
- A review of use of meeting rooms in SMP
- Location of various Council Meetings from January 2012 onwards
- A review of the heating and ventilation system at SMP

## **6. Comments of other Committees**

This report has not being presented or considered by any other committee

## **7. Conclusion**

In light of the number of office moves that have taken place over the 18 months it is a credit to the all our staff in ensuring that there was minimal disruption to the services we provide to our residents during this period.

The remainder of the moves scheduled to take place over the next two months will ensure that the Old Town Hall site is vacated by the remaining SBC teams (excluding CCTV) ready for future refurbishment as a school.

**8. Background Papers**

None.