

AGENDA ITEM

REPORT TO CABINET

14 NOVEMBER 2019

**REPORT OF PEOPLE SELECT
COMMITTEE**

CABINET DECISION

Leader of Council - Lead Cabinet Member – Councillor Bob Cook

**TASK AND FINISH SCRUTINY REVIEW OF SMARTER WORKING IN STOCKTON-ON-TEES –
ACCOMMODATION AND BUILDINGS**

SUMMARY

The People Select Committee's Task and Finish Group has completed a review examining the Council's office accommodation. The Group has reviewed the current arrangements within the context of the Smarter Working programme and the future needs of the Authority and workforce.

Having reviewed the options available, the Group believe the best solution would be for the Council to move towards having a single main building for its office accommodation needs. Further work will be needed to more fully investigate the financial and development requirements of the options and the Group recommends that this work should now take place.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION(S) / DECISION(S)

This topic was included in the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2019-20. The review is now complete and recommendations have been made for Cabinet to consider.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task and Finish Group made the following recommendations:

1. Cabinet note that the Task and Finish Group endorses the aim of developing accessible and inspiring workspaces which enable collaborative and flexible working;
2. The Council's existing office workspace is of inconsistent condition, inflexible, and too large for the current and projected needs of the Council's workforce. The total available space should be reduced, in conjunction with the creation of a more flexible working environment to allow staff to access different types of office space;
3. When taking steps to improve the quality of its office accommodation, the Council should ensure a key focus of this work is the wellbeing and productivity of its staff;
4. In order to achieve recommendations 1-3, the Council should further explore the options to create a single building for the Council's office accommodation;
5. As part of the above work, the Council should ensure that staff and stakeholder engagement is integral to the process.

DETAIL

1. The attached report outlines the outcomes of the People Select Committee's Task and Finish Review of Smarter Working in Stockton-On-Tees (SWiS) - Accommodation and Buildings.
2. The review has been supported and informed by Finance and Business Services. The Task and Finish Group has visited existing Council buildings (Stirling House, Kingsway, Municipal Buildings, 16 Church Road, Bayheath House) and spoken with members of staff. The Group also visited North Tyneside Council at Cobalt Business Park, Thirteen Group at Northshore, and the Cleveland Police Community Safety Hub at Hemlington.
3. In relation to Property implications, details of the current office accommodation (including locations and associated costs) have been considered as part of the review and this information is included in the Group's report. Final decisions in relation to specific buildings will be the subject of future work, subject to agreement of the recommendations.

COMMUNITY IMPACT IMPLICATIONS

4. A Community Impact Assessment has not been completed at this stage as this Task and Finish Review has focussed on the overall principles of future office accommodation. The details of any future developments (including, but not limited to, accessibility for staff and visitors) will be subject to future reports.

CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

5. There are no specific corporate parenting implications at this stage.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6. The attached report outlines the operating costs and projected repair costs for the current range of office buildings. Subject to agreement of the recommendations, further work will be undertaken to determine the financial implications of developing a single office site.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7. There are no specific legal implications at this stage.

RISK ASSESSMENT

8. This Scrutiny Review of SWiS – Accommodation and Buildings is categorised as low to medium risk. Existing management systems and daily routine activities are sufficient to control and reduce risk.

WARDS AFFECTED AND CONSULTATION WITH WARD/COUNCILLORS

9. Not applicable.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

10. None.

Name of Contact Officer: Peter Mennear

Post Title: Scrutiny Officer

Telephone No. 01642 528957

Email Address: peter.mennear@stockton.gov.uk