Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Big plans, bright future

Review of Smarter Working in Stockton – Accommodation and Buildings

People Select Committee
Task and Finish Group

Final Report

October 2019

People Select Committee
Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council
Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

Contents

Page

Task and Finish Group membership

Councillor Mohammed Javed (Chair)

Councillor Helen Atkinson
Councillor Bill Woodhead

Acknowledgements

The Committee would like to thank the following people for contributing to its work:

Michelle Connolly, Business Partner (Smarter Working in Stockton)
Garry Cummings, Director of Finance and Business Services
Ian Coxon, Assistant Director (Information and Improvement Services)

Kathryn Curtis, Office of the Cleveland Police and Crime Commissioner
Phil Cowan, Thirteen Group
Niall Cathie, Strategic Property Manager, North Tyneside Council
Brett Devenish, Capita

Members would like to thank all members of staff who spoke with the Group during its visits to current accommodation.

Contact Officer

Peter Mennear, Scrutiny Officer
Tel: 01642 528957
E-mail: peter.mennear@stockton.gov.uk

Original Brief

Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?

The review will contribute to the following Council Plan 2019-22 theme and objectives:

Our Council
- Deliver a balanced and sustainable medium term financial plan.
- Ensure the Council uses its assets effectively.
- Continue to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of our services.
- Continue to attract, develop and support diverse, capable and resilient employees.
- Deliver effective communication.

What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?

Ongoing budgetary pressures and declining workforce numbers are leading Local Authorities across the UK to consider their office workspace offer and determine if there is a need to rationalise Council buildings. In addition, advances in technology have given rise to alternative working practices, particularly around mobile and home working.

[….]

The Council's Smarter Working in Stockton (SWiS) programme is challenging and changing the way the organisation thinks about work, how it does it, and how it can work smarter. The programme consists of four main strands – *Customers*, *Information*, *Technology* and *Workspaces* – which, if developed together, should improve customer engagement, reduce time spent on non-productive work, and have a positive impact on staff morale. Cabinet receive an annual report on the programme's progress, and have previously supported the rationalisation of the Council's existing buildings to ensure it operates efficiently and effectively.

Current accommodation and office environments are expensive to operate, have an array of maintenance issues, and currently there is surplus capacity with opportunities for further reductions. This review will therefore focus on the area of *Workspaces*, examining current workspace provision and assessing options for the future use and number of Council buildings. It will aim to ensure that the Council has appropriate value-for-money infrastructure in place, and that it is equipped to keep pace with changes expected by staff and its customers.

The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:

What / where are the existing Council buildings / workspace (Member and Officer accommodation), occupancy and costs – how has this changed over recent times?

Future workspace options and potential benefits / risks.

Impact of changes to workspace provision, facilitation of alternative working practices, and staff wellbeing. How will changes to the number and location of buildings, if applicable, be communicated internally and to wider partners and the public?

Learning from workspace developments within other Local Authorities and organisations.

Executive Summary

1.1   This report presents the outcomes of the People Select Committee's Task and Finish Review of Smarter Working in Stockton-On-Tees (SWiS) - Accommodation and Buildings.

1.2.   Changes to working practices are taking place across business sectors; these can be for a variety of reasons including the desire to work more flexibly, new technology, and employee demand. In addition Local Authorities have experienced significant reductions in workforce and ongoing budget pressures, and across the region councils are considering the options for their office workspace across the region.

1.3   The Council has agreed that Stockton's approach to these changes will be taken forward under the banner of 'Smart Working in Stockton-on-Tees (SWiS)'. The agreed vision for the programme is as follows:
- a modern Council that responses to customer needs;
- one Council approach to customers, workspaces, information and technology.

1.4   This review has focussed on the office accommodation element of SWiS. Having reviewed the current arrangements, the Task and Finish Group agrees that they are no longer suitable for the modern workspace. The majority of the existing ten buildings:
- are inflexible;
- do not allow for open flexible spaces and a more modern approach to work;
- prevent collaboration between teams, and;
- some require significant maintenance.

1.5   Retention of the existing ten buildings would require critical essential repairs and maintenance to bring the buildings up to an acceptable standard; outstanding maintenance costs amount to c.£20m over a period of 25 years. Even assuming this investment was made, continuing to operate across ten buildings would not deliver the desired smarter working vision or principles.

1.6   Having reviewed the options available, the Task and Finish Group believe the best solution would be for the Council to investigate 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 believe this work should now take place.

1.7   The development of high profile Council office accommodation can be a sensitive issue and staff and stakeholder engagement will need to be an integral part of this work. From the evidence gathered during its review, the Group believes that the existing buildings are no longer providing the accommodation required by the Council. A single building should enable the most benefit to be achieved from improved ways of working, and provide the modern working environment that the Council's staff deserve.

1.8   The Task and Finish Group makes the following recommendations:

   1. **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.**

Introduction

2.1   This report presents the outcomes of the People Select Committee's Task and Finish Review of Smarter Working in Stockton-On-Tees (SWiS) - Accommodation and Buildings.

2.2   Changes to working practices are taking place across business sectors. These can be for a variety of reasons but these can be summarised as follows:
- greater focus on outcomes not process
- advances in technology
- ermployee demand
- desire and ability to work more in a more flexible and productive manner
- need to work more collaboratively across teams and departments, and with other organisations
- reducing the environmental impact of work.

2.3   Local authorities are considering the options for their office workspace to respond to reductions in their workforce and ongoing budget pressures. A number of councils have developed plans to reshape their office accommodation, including several in the north east.

2.4   The Government Guide to Smarter Working has been circulated during the review. It outlines the progress of central Government departments towards new ways of working, including changes to accommodation. This Guide identified a number of potential changes to workspaces including 'well-designed workplaces [that] support how people work best with location options such as shared hubs, hosted space, HQs and home', and 'work […] being done in a variety of appropriately designed shared settings within those workplaces, no longer tethered to a desk'. It states that 'work in the 21st century is about what you do, not where you do it'.

2.5   The Guide also recognises that there are challenges and opportunities in relation to the implementation of new ways of working and maintenance and improvement of work/life balance.

2.6   The drivers for change are not unique to Stockton, and Stockton's response is contained within the SWiS programme which covers Workspaces, Information, Technology, and Customers.

2.7   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.

2.8   Recognising the increasing pressure on the Council's finances, it is imperative that all in depth scrutiny reviews promote the Council's policy priorities and where possible seek to identify efficiencies and reduce demand for services.

Background

3.1 Under 'Our Ways of Working', the Council Plan 2019-2022 commits the Authority to the following:
- providing digital access to its services
- using existing and new technologies to help us work differently
- making optimum use of the places where we work
- ensuring that our policies, processes and procedures are as efficient and productive as they can be
- ensuring our infrastructure is fit for purpose for a modern organisation.

3.2 The Council has agreed that Stockton's approach will be taken forward under the banner of 'Smart Working in Stockton-on-Tees (SWiS)'. The agreed vision for the programme is as follows:
- modern Council that responses to customer needs
- one Council approach to customers, workspaces, information and technology.

3.3 The programme is working towards improvements in four main areas:
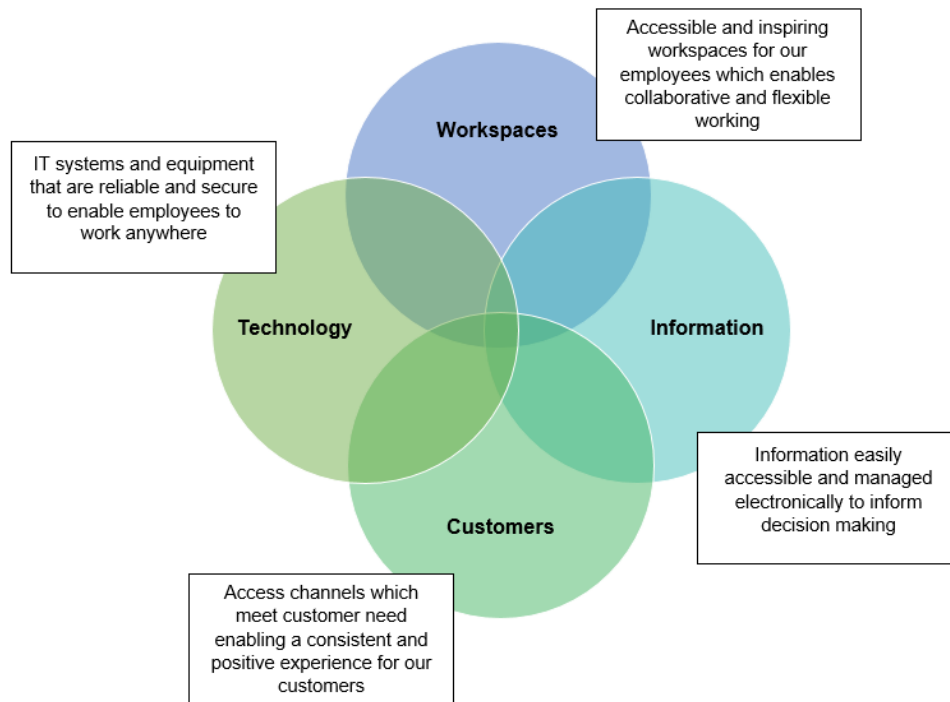
3.4 The Workspaces element of the programme aims to achieve the following:

- flexible spaces

- workspace that fits the work profile (different and fewer desks)

- improved ergonomic layout

- effective use of space

- team space

- essential physical storage space only

- well-lit, comfortable and ventilated

- formal and informal meeting space

- workspaces designed for task

- teams co-located for collaboration

- workspace location linked to worker profile and customer.

3.5   Broadly speaking, staff can be banded into three main groups: those who undertake their work on a mobile basis, those who are mobile some of the time or away from their desks for long periods of time, and those who are more desk based. Improvements to workspaces will seek benefits for all 'groups'.

3.6   The SWiS Programme is a long term piece of work however it is the intention that this review will identify the principles for future office accommodation and potential options for development.

Findings

<u>The baseline position</u>

4.1   The Council currently has ten main office buildings in the scope of this review. These can be found on the map attached. They occupy 21,000 m2 and house 1,520 members of staff.

4.2   The overall footprint of office work space is now greater than what is required by the size of the workforce, and the quality of accommodation no longer reflects the current and future desired ways of working. Capacity and revenue expenditure for each building is shown below.

Summary	Spend £	Current Capacity	Current Occupancy*
Municipal Buildings	309,016	398	360
Kingsway House	115,584	186	159
Queensway House	54,830	195	181
Bayheath House	274,215	320	288
16 Church Road	147,947	165	145
Stirling House	79,199	183	157
Tithebarn House	93,130	140	131
Ideal House	60,566	83	38
Parkside	45,668	50	24
70 Norton Road	17,188	21	20
Total	**1,197,343**	**1,741**	**1,503**

*Current occupancy is based on all members of a team working in the office; in reality this number is greatly reduced in some areas due to agile working.

4.3   In addition to the annual spend of c.£1.2m shown above, the buildings are in need of major repair and upgrade with an amount of c.£20m needed to fund this if the Council was to retain all ten buildings. If funded through prudential borrowing, this would amount to £800k per year, bringing total spend on existing buildings to c £2m per year.

4.4   Office accommodation has developed over the years and there are a variety of layouts in place. Some are cellular and others are open plan – some buildings have a mix of both. Not all buildings are purpose built office accommodation and the office estate includes converted former care homes.

Stirling House   Queensway House (Kingsway is adjacent and of the same design)

4.5   Services are dispersed across the various buildings as shown in Appendix 2 (showing buildings and their occupants) and Appendix 3 (showing the how each directorate is spread across buildings). This geographical spread of services presents a range of difficulties and added costs for the council:

- council services are split between office buildings making collaboration within teams, services and across the council difficult;
- unnecessary costs both in officer time and claiming for fuel allowance due to constant travel between offices;
- multiple buildings bring a need for additional support services e.g. administration and reception functions present at multiple sites; ICT and security services support required for each building;
- additional requirements for cleaning and provision of kitchen and toilet facilities.

4.6   Analysis indicates there have been a total of forty relocation/reconfiguration projects over a three year period. The current configuration of offices means it is extremely difficult to accommodate services when they change in size, and buildings regularly require adaptation.

4.7   Due to the spread of teams, there are notable differences in the way services work across the council; this was reinforced during SWiS Programme staff engagement sessions where seventy Talent Network members commented on:

- the quality of the buildings and how the offer to staff differs across the Borough.
- feelings of isolation in some parts of the organisation due to where they are based.

Visits to existing accommodation

4.8   During the visits Members highlighted the poor state of repair of some of the buildings particularly in Church Road and Stirling House, and commented on the amount of empty space in some areas. Office accommodation is often housed in buildings that were originally built for an entirely different purpose – Church Road is an historic police station, Stirling House, Tithebarn and Parkside are all former care homes.

16 Church Road
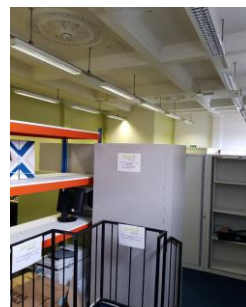
4.9   Unsuitable office space and equipment was often present and in need of updating. Heating and ventilation was poor in places but Council staff appeared to be coping well. Members noted that reception facilities for members of the public to access different services were spread across several buildings and therefore the Borough.

Stirling House

4.10   Members also noted that unlike other organisations, the Council did not have in-house staff facilities such as canteen areas and showers.

4.11   Staff reductions had been significant, and many teams were smaller than previously. However the new size of teams did not neatly fit with the available accommodation and it was difficult to rationalise the available space. Although the visits took place during the holiday period, it was evident that some buildings have substantial areas of empty space and/or desks not in use.
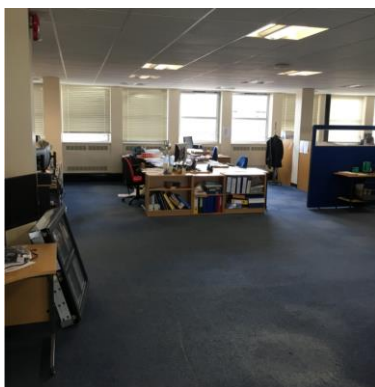

Kingsway House

4.12 Individual service areas had developed different ways of working where this was feasible, including the introduction of open plan and more informal break out, meeting, and 'quiet' areas. However the ability to do this is not consistent throughout the Council.

New and informal meeting spaces in Municipal Buildings including 'work arounds' developed by staff

4.13 Some internal office space in Kingsway and Bayheath was highlighted as being better quality although 'traditional' approaches to desk space were being used, and this quality was not uniform across the Authority.

4.14 Broadly speaking, of the existing accommodation, the better (but not optimum) quality buildings were Municipal, Kingsway, and Bayheath House (which hosted some of the most modern working environments). Members noted that Kingsway and Queensway brought significant accessibility challenges for both staff and customers.
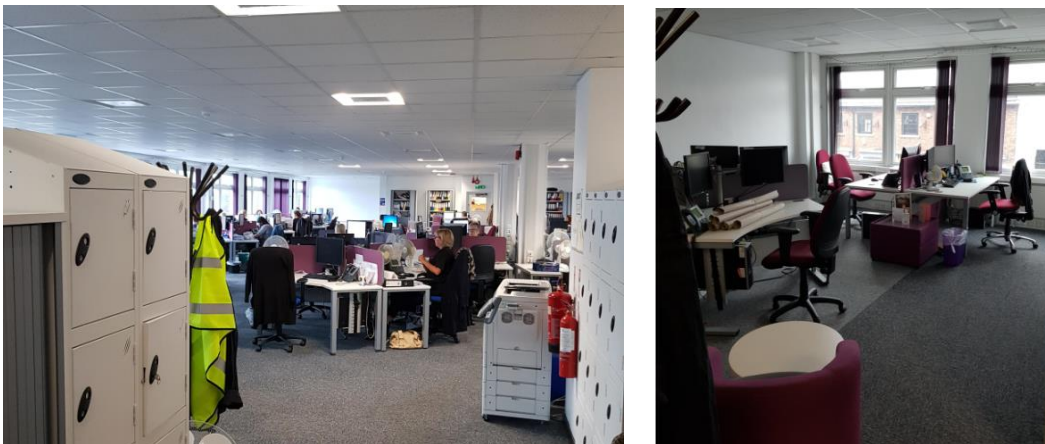
Refurbished accommodation in Bayheath (including personal lockers and height adjustable desks)

4.15 In summary there are a number of issues with the Council's existing buildings and all are in need of improvement:

- there are significant maintenance issues;
- the heating, lighting and ventilation is poor and inconsistent between buildings;
- there is a lack of natural light meaning that lights are on in most buildings permanently;

14

- there is a lack of kitchen facilities and staff welfare facilities;
- a number of the buildings have access issues for disabled staff and visitors;
- design options are limited with columns and supporting walls dictating how the space can be used;
- some of the buildings did not originate as office accommodation and working arrangements are difficult for teams to manage.

4.16   Retention of the existing ten buildings would require critical essential repairs and maintenance to bring the buildings up to an acceptable standard. As noted above, outstanding maintenance costs amount to £20m over a period of 25 years.

Staff Wellbeing and Performance

4.17   The People Select Committee undertook a review of Sickness Absence at the Council in 2017.   As part of staff feedback gathered to inform the review, current office accommodation was identified as being a factor in increasing the risk of absence. It was recommended that the Council fully explore smarter ways of working to enable greater flexibility for staff, and that working environments should be considered when considering the reasons behind sickness absence.

4.18   The Task and Finish Group has found that the workplace is changing at a rapid pace and research has highlighted that the work environment greatly impacts productivity. Although difficult to quantify, the design of the workspace can be directly linked to employee performance.

4.19   Officers noted research undertaken on behalf of the Council that provided insight into the importance of well-designed office layouts and furniture in improving staff feelings of worth and productivity. This includes basics needs such as the quality of toilet provision, and the availability and quality of food.

4.20   It is evident that one type of office space is not suitable for all work activities; the space required for creativity, concentration or collaboration will look and feel very different. However staff are currently provided with a desk and one space from which they are expected to perform the majority of activities.   Attempting to be creative in a small office with inadequate lighting and decoration or attempting to concentrate in an open office with increased noise levels and risks of interruption are the challenges our staff face.   The difficulty in performing a job role from an inadequate workspace will, over time, affect motivation and result in employees feeling unsupported and becoming unproductive.

4.21   Members on the Group commented that the current working conditions for staff – ie. the Council's most important resource – are on the whole not good enough. The Group agrees that the opportunities resulting from a better working environment are likely to bring rewards for both the individual's wellbeing, and the productivity of the Council as a whole.

<u>Smarter Working Opportunities</u>

4.22   The Council is already witnessing a change to working practices with some services embracing the opportunity to work in a more efficient way away from their desk. With the decision to move to all staff having a mobile laptop, this will allow all staff the opportunity to work away from their desk or outside of their normal office environment as their job role permits.

4.23   At present, many of the desks and individual offices are left empty due to staff working elsewhere or absent/on leave. Opportunities to rationalise buildings can be realised by reducing desks and providing office staff with a space that suits their job role.

4.24   From an accommodation perspective, the ideal position would be an open space which can be used for a variety of different workplace settings; this aligns with the first of the smarter working operating principles of 'flexible spaces'. This will represent a significant improvement on the current arrangements; research has indicated that there are ten different potential types of office space but the Council currently essentially only offers two: desk space and meeting rooms.

4.25   The changes anticipated to working practices are significant and work has already commenced on the change management approach linking with the Council's desired culture. Members noted that one building will bring consistency in layout and design with the smarter working vision statement of 'One council approach to customers, workspaces, information and technology' being realised. Four or more buildings however, due to the limitations of each would inevitably result in four (or more) different approaches.

<u>Alternative workspaces</u>

4.26   As part of the SWiS Programme staff discussion, people from across the organisation were asked for their views on the opportunities and challenges of any future accommodation. Comments included the benefits of co-location, improved environment, and better communication across services. Perceived challenges included the need for a commonly understood approach to any new ways of working, potential issues with open plan offices, and how each team's needs will be met.

4.27   These comments highlight the importance of ensuring that any future accommodation change project has staff engagement at the heart of its work. The need for this approach including timely communciations was also highlighted in the visits to all external organisations.

4.28   To assess the options for alternative workspaces, the Group visit organisations across the region.

North Tyneside Council Headquarters (Quadrant, Cobalt Business Park)

4.29   The Council moved to one central office building in 2007. This was due to a desire to improve its working environment, efficiency and in response to projected maintenance costs for existing buildings.

4.30 The move to a central office location hosting the majority of the Council's office-based teams took place in conjunction with the development of a customer contact centre in seven of the Council's main areas of population. The Council therefore now works to a Hub and Spoke model – with Quadrant and the seven customer service centres. This compares to the original 28 buildings located across the Borough.

4.31 The new building has enabled a range of savings and energy efficiencies. It is the Council's perception that stakeholders and business visitors are impressed by the new accommodation and believes it reflects a more modern and business-like approach.
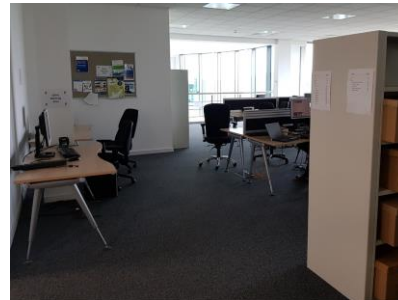

Quadrant

4.32 Flexible, 'non-territorial', and virtual team working have been adopted although the Council agrees its needs to more fully embrace agile working. The Quadrant building now operates on a 7 to 10 desk to staff ratio, having originally had 1:1 arrangements in place.

Council Chamber at Quadrant   Quiet working area at Quadrant

4.33 The Council highlighted the need for clarity on what is required within any new buildings and the relationship with existing assets in the locality. This is particularly relevant in relation to the development of customer facing buildings, and the relationship with other services such as libraries.

Cleveland Police Community Safety Hub (Hemlington)

4.34 The new Community Safety Hub contains the headquarters for Cleveland Police, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), and some space for partner organisations. The Hub hosts 300 members of staff.

4.35 The old accommodation at Ladgate Lane was too large for the requirements of the force - the new Hub is four times smaller than Ladgate Lane and provides a significantly improved environment.

4.36   The offices are designed to offer the maximum flexibility and to accommodate change if this is needed. The floors of the building are slightly different to suit the needs of operation. The top floor is open plan and hosts support services. Other floors are separated with glass walls and a number of smaller officers. There are a number of communal areas with refreshment facilities, and also hot desk space. The new building has a desk to employee ratio of 8:10.

4.37   The office is now generally open plan and working effectively in this environment has required a culture change as it is very different to the previous headquarters.

Community Safety Hub

Thirteen Group (North Shore and Hudson's Quay)

4.38   At the time of completion Northshore became the headquarters of the recently merged Thirteen Group. It was recognised that it was too large from the beginning, and the organisation also had office accommodation at Hudson's Quay in Middlesbrough. A new modern workspace was however created at Northshore and this includes a hot desking approach, personal lockers, clear desk policies, a variety of desk and break out furniture, and new approaches to meeting space.

North Shore (including 'live' meeting space booking systems)

4.39   As part of an ongoing 'Right Space Right Place' programme, the organisation is now seeking to centralise its main base at an updated Hudson's Quay. Thirteen intends to retain one floor of Northshore for its commercial homebuilding arm, and rent the remainder of the building as modern office space. Northshore is a bespoke design, but Hudson's

Quay is more of a standard office building and will undergo internal refurbishment. Members visited North Shore.

North Shore

4.40   A key driver of the latest move is the need to remain competitive in the market. Thirteen recognises that the working environment continues to change, and it will need to increasingly attract staff from a global pool of potential employees. The organisation will therefore need to have attractive office accommodation as well as being better set up for agile remote working.

4.41   Thirteen also believes if they successfully develop Hudson's Quay there will be less need to make future changes to the office accommodation. Under the old way of working, an increase of 100 staff, for example, would translate into a need for space for 100 new desks. This is not the case with a fully agile organisation. We hope that, as we embed into this way of working, we find we need less space as more people take the opportunity to be more mobile.

4.42   Hudson's Quay will have some overprovision of desk space but with the intention that this can be used more flexibly. A desk management system will be in place which will enable spare desks to be located, and this is provided by a Dutch company for the first time in a UK office. Users will be able to log in to each desk, which will recognise a user's individual preferences eg. height, and will be able to be used for a full day, half day, or on a hot desking basis.

4.43   Different types of work will be able to take place in different zones (eg. quiet zone, 'loud' zone), and showers, and rest and relaxation spaces will be provided. Each member of staff will have a 'buddy' to support a pastoral approach, recognising members of staff may be working in different locations in and out of the office and see their team members less often.

4.44   Recognising the need for change to better reflect agile working, policies and procedures are being revised to take a more trust-based approach and will be contained within a 'Simple Guide to Working at Thirteen'.

4.45   The visits highlighted a number of options in relation to funding. North Tyneside leased a single, existing (but new) office building through a Lease Plus arrangement whereby facilities management is included in the 35 year lease (an additional 10 years was included reflecting the nature of Local Authorities being seen as good tenants over the longer term). Alternatively Cleveland Police had fully funded its new headquarters through proceeds from the sale of its previous base.

4.46   A key element noted from the visits has been the adoption of flexible workspaces. There is recognition that not all work can be undertaken in the same type of environment, and office space must reflect the different types of tasks undertaken across an organisation.

Options for Stockton-on-Tees Council

4.47   Within this context, the Task and Finish Group has considered a number of options to address the Council's future accommodation needs. Members agree that the current arrangements are no longer suitable for the modern workspace. The majority of the buildings are inflexible and do not allow for open flexible spaces and prevent teams that would benefit from being near each other working efficiently. Retaining these buildings would require critical essential repairs and maintenance to bring the buildings up to an acceptable standard. Even assuming this investment was made, continuing to operate across ten buildings would not deliver the smarter working vision or principles.

4.48   Options for the future can essentially can be summarised into either redeveloping some of the existing buildings, or creating a single new office building:

    Option 1 – Basic refurbishment - Retain the four larger buildings of Municipal Buildings, Bayheath House, Kingsway House and Queensway House, carry out a basic refurbishment and release six buildings for either disposal or lease.

    Option 2 – Remodel - An extension of option 1 retaining the 4 larger buildings but with each stripped to the shell to provide an open space to be completely re-modelled allowing a flexible design.

    Option 3 – Build New - A purpose built new facility, built specifically around the smarter working vision and principles and release ten buildings for either disposal or lease.

    Option 4 – Lease one new building - A variation of option 3 but leasing an existing building rather than build new or taking a head lease from a developer on a purpose built new facility.

4.49   These options are shown in more detail as follows:

Option 1 – Basic refurbishment

Retain the four larger buildings of Municipal Buildings, Bayheath House, Kingsway House and Queensway House, carry out a basic refurbishment and release six buildings for either disposal or lease.

A basic refurbishment across four buildings however is unlikely to achieve the smarter working

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vision and principles. Whilst this option does allow for the removal of some walls, the structure of the buildings is such that a major refurbishment would be needed to remove all. With the inevitable retention of cellular offices, we will not be able to offer all services flexible spaces designed for the task, dedicated team space will be disjointed and co-location difficult.   The wellbeing aspects of well-lit, comfortable spaces will not be achievable and with employees spread across four buildings the Council will struggle to realise the overarching vision to become one council with a silo approach in some service areas likely to remain.

Although this option reduces the number of buildings the challenges around multiple buildings remain, limiting the ability for consistency across buildings e.g. café facilities, wellbeing and circulation space and multiple support services. The relocation programme involving the move of staff and services in and around the Borough would also bring significant disruption.

Option 2 – Remodel

An extension of Option 1, retaining the four larger buildings but with each stripped to the shell to provide an open space to be completely re-modelled allowing a flexible design.

This option will allow for a flexible workspace with areas designed for activities supporting a number of the smarter working principles. The option does pose the risk highlighted in Option 1 around the spread of employees across four buildings and the extent to which we can therefore move to a 'one council approach'. Also, whilst this option does include remodelling of the internal space the external features remain; the lack of natural lighting therefore in the middle of some floors cannot therefore be achieved for some buildings as the windows are relatively small in relation to the width of the floor area resulting in the need for artificial lighting and the issues that brings.

As with Option 1, although this option reduces the number of buildings the challenges around multiple buildings remain, limiting the ability for consistency across buildings e.g. café facilities, wellbeing and circulation space and multiple support services. The relocation programme involving the move of staff and services in and around the Borough would also bring significant disruption.

Option 3 – Build New

A purpose built new facility, built specifically around the smarter working vision and principles.

This option comes with the advantage of achieving the smarter working principles and the overarching vision of a 'one council approach'. With all office staff working from one office building the council can begin to share best working practices, ensure the desired culture reaches all service areas and reap results from the collaboration opportunities the design presents.

As a new build it will be more efficient to operate and will bring about many of the wellbeing positives due to the natural light, comfort and ventilation that can be achieved. The opportunities to design the workspace to provide the many different activity workspaces are real and allow all staff across the council to make use of them. Providing staff with the choice of sitting in their dedicated team space or moving to an area more suited to the work activity will bring real benefits in productivity.

The smarter working programme requires a significant change for employees, site visits to

other organisations that have undertaken such a move suggests moving all staff out of their current building whilst ambitious and not without its difficulties, was paramount to the acceptance of new ways of working. Leaving the old environment behind provided other organisations with the opportunity to leave old working practices behind and embrace the changes.

The new building includes a relocation of the library and customer services centre. This would also give the opportunity to redesign these facilities, particularly the customer service facility to reflect the digital and self-service developments.

Option 4 – Lease one existing building

A variation of option 3 but
- Leasing an existing building or;
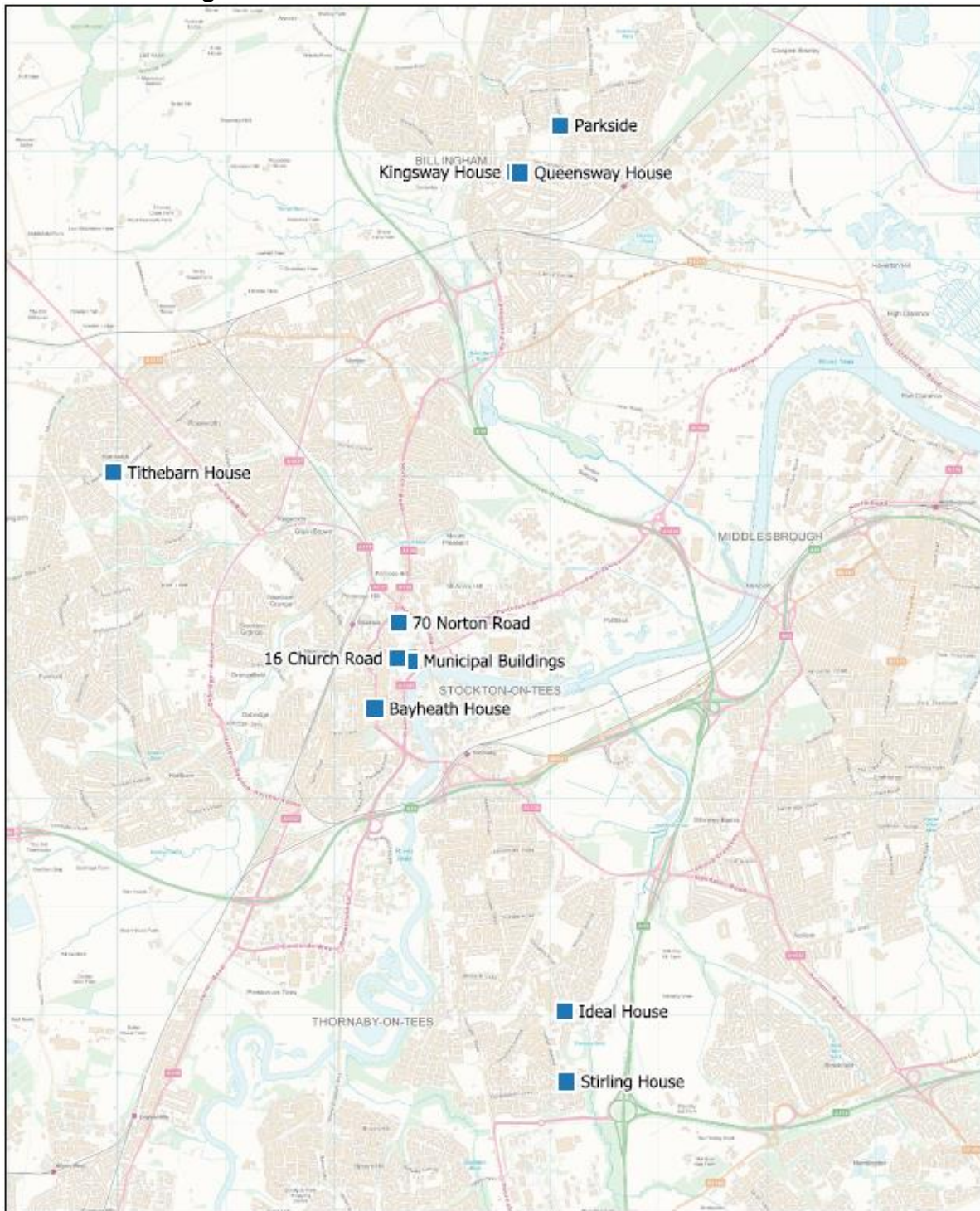- Taking a head lease from a developer on a purpose built new facility.

Leasing an existing building may have limitations depending on layout and design and a review of unoccupied buildings in the Borough suggests that no suitable building is available at present.

Taking the head lease from a developer on a purpose built new facility however would allow the council to influence the design and build to reflect our smarter working principles.

Conclusion

5.1   Having reviewed the options available, the Task and Finish Group believe the best solution would be for the Council to investigate 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 believe this work should now take place.

5.2   The development of high profile Council office accommodation can be a sensitive issue and staff and stakeholder engagement will need to be an integral part of this work. From the evidence gathered during its review, the Group believes that the existing buildings are no longer providing the accommodation required by the Council, and the spend of c.£20m required to upgrade these buildings should be avoided. A single new building should enable the most benefit to be achieved from improved ways of working, and provide the modern working environment that the Council's staff deserve.

Appendix 1 – Existing Office Locations

Appendix 2 – Buildings and Occupants

Building	Floor	Directorate	Service Area
Bayheath House	Ground Floor	Community Services	Concierge
	First Floor	Finance & Business Services	Revenues & Benefits
	Second Floor	Finance & Business Services	Revenues & Benefits
	Second Floor	Xentrall	Creditors
	Third Floor	Children's Services	Youth Offending Service
	Fourth Floor	Finance & Business Services	Information & Improvement
	Fifth Floor	Xentrall	Payroll
Church Road	Garages	Adults & Health	Environmental Health
	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Administration
	Ground Floor	Economic Growth & Development Services	Housing Services
	Ground Floor	Xentrall	ICT
	Ground Floor	Children's Services	Education
	Ground Floor	Children's Services	Reception – Youth Services
	First Floor	Community Services	Trading Standards
	First Floor	Adults & Health	Public Health
	Second Floor	Vacant	
Ideal House	Ground Floor	NHS	
	First Floor	Adults & Health	Assessment & Support Planning
Kingsway House	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Administration
		Culture, Leisure & Events	Reception
	First Floor	Children's Services	Early Help
	First Floor	Children's Services	Independent Review & Workforce Development
	First Floor	Adults & Health	Assessment & Support Planning
	Second Floor	Economic Growth & Development Services	Highways, Transport & Design
	Third Floor	Children's Services	Youth Direction
	Fourth Floor	Economic Growth & Development Services	Highways, Transport & Design
	Fourth Floor	Economic Growth & Development Services	Business Support
Queensway House	First Floor	Adults & Health	Assessment & Support Planning

	Second Floor	Adults & Health	Assessment & Support Planning
	Second Floor	Children's Services	Permanence, Fostering, LAC
	Third Floor	Leased to external organisation	
	Fourth Floor	Adults & Health	Assessment & Support Planning
	Fourth Floor	Children's Services	Special Educational Needs
Municipal Buildings	Basement	Culture, Leisure & Events	Events
	Basement	Xentrall	Design & Print
	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Administration
	Ground Floor	Culture, Leisure & Events	Reception
	Ground Floor	Culture, Leisure & Events	Customer Services
	Ground Floor	Culture, Leisure & Events	Sports Development
	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Civic & Member Services, Electoral & Scrutiny, Licencing
	First Floor	Finance & Business Services	Information & Improvement
	First Floor	Finance & Business Services	Finance, Assets and Procurement
	First Floor	HR, Legal & Communications	Human Resources
	First Floor	HR, Legal & Communications	Communication, Consultation & Engagement
	First Floor	Adults & Health	Adult Strategy
	First Floor	Children's Services	Independent Review & Workforce Dev
	First Floor	Culture, Leisure & Events	Sports Development
	First Floor	Culture, Leisure & Events	Library Services
	Second Floor	All	Corporate Directors
	Second Floor	HR, Legal & Communications	Media
	Second Floor	Economic Growth & Development Services	Economic Growth & Capital Programmes
	Second Floor	HR, Legal & Communications	Legal
70 Norton Road	Ground Floor	Children's Services	Safeguarding & LAC
	First Floor	Children's Services	Safeguarding & LAC
	Second Floor	Children's Services	Safeguarding & LAC
Parkside	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Administration
	Ground Floor	Children's Services	Independent Review & Workforce Development

	Ground Floor	Adults & Health	Learning Disability & Mental Health
	First Floor	Adults & Health	Learning Disability & Mental Health
Stirling House	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Administration
	Ground Floor	Children's Services	Assessment & Fieldwork
	First Floor	Children's Services	Assessment & Fieldwork
Tithebarn House	Ground Floor	Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services	Administration
	Ground Floor	Adults & Health	Learning Disability & Mental Health
	First Floor	Adults & Health	Learning Disability & Mental Health

Appendix 3 – Location of Directorates

Directorate	Service Area	Building
All	Corporate Directors	Municipal Buildings
Adults & Health 7 buildings	Environmental Health	Church Road
	Public Health	Church Road
	Assessment & Support Planning	Ideal House
	Assessment & Support Planning	Kingsway House
	Assessment & Support Planning	Queensway House
	Adult Strategy	Municipal Buildings
	Learning Disability & Mental Health	Parkside
	Learning Disability & Mental Health	Tithebarn House
Children's Services 7 buildings	Youth Offending Service	Bayheath House
	Education	Church Road
	Reception – Youth Services	Church Road
	Early Help	Kingsway House
	Independent Review & Workforce Development	Kingsway House
	Youth Direction	Kingsway House
	Permanence, Fostering, LAC	Queensway House
	Special Educational Needs	Queensway House
	Safeguarding & LAC	70 Norton Road
	Independent Review & Workforce Development	Parkside
	Assessment & Fieldwork	Stirling House
Community Services 2 buildings (plus depot and Nightingale House)	Concierge	Bayheath House
	Trading Standards	Church Road
Culture, Leisure & Events 2 buildings	Reception	Kingsway House
	Events	Municipal Buildings
	Reception	Municipal Buildings
	Customer Services	Municipal Buildings

	Sports Development	Municipal Buildings
	Library Services	Municipal Buildings
Democratic, Administration & Electoral Services 6 buildings	Administration	Church Road
	Administration	Kingsway House
	Administration	Municipal Buildings
	Civic & Member Services, Electoral & Scrutiny, Licencing	Municipal Buildings
	Administration	Parkside
	Administration	Stirling House
	Administration	Tithebarn House
Economic Growth & Development Services 3 buildings	Housing Services	Church Road
	Highways, Transport & Design	Kingsway House
	Business Support	Kingsway House
	Economic Growth & Capital Programmes	Municipal Buildings
Finance & Business Services 2 buildings	Revenues & Benefits	Bayheath House
	Information & Improvement	Bayheath House
	Information & Improvement	Municipal Buildings
	Finance, Assets and Procurement	Municipal Buildings
HR, Legal & Communications 1 building	HR & Communications	Municipal Buildings
	Media	Municipal Buildings
	Legal	Municipal Buildings
Xentrall 3 buildings (plus Darlington)	Creditors	Bayheath House
	Payroll	Bayheath House
	ICT	Church Road
	Design & Print	Municipal Buildings