

# WIRRAL COUNCIL

## COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 OCTOBER 2012

<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>OFFICE RATIONALISATION</b>
<b>WARD/S AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL WARDS</b>
<b>REPORT OF:</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>RESPONSIBLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER:</b>	<b>COUNCILLOR ADRIAN JONES</b>
<b>KEY DECISION?</b>	<b>NO</b>

### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Committee on recent activity in respect of The Office Rationalisation Programme
- 1.2 Rationalisation of the Council's administrative accommodation will support the corporate priority of improving the efficiency and value for money of Council services and will result in financial savings to the Council.
- 1.3 Office rationalisation is not a statutory duty.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The report be noted

### 3.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 This update is provided at the request of the Committee

### 4.0 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Progress since the last update on 26 March 2012 is summarised below.
- 4.2 IT Services worked to prepare accommodation at the Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane to facilitate the accommodation of all staff from Bebington Town Hall.

Bebington Town Hall was then vacated during the school summer holidays, with all staff who operated from the building successfully relocated to Acre Lane.

IT services are arranging for the servers and communication links to be removed from the building and redirected as necessary. In this area timescales will depend on work that is required to be undertaken by BT. Once timescales

are confirmed the building will be prepared for demolition, with subsequent site treatment. At this stage it is estimated that all IT connections should have been removed by April 2013, but a more definitive timescale will be provided when the project plan is finalised.

Detailed discussions will now take place with building occupiers in Bebington Town Hall Annexe and Liscard Municipal Building; in each case to agree alternative locations.

- 4.3 A new location for staff currently based in the Old Courthouse, Wallasey, has now been agreed. This will be in the Moreton Municipal Building and is intended to follow the integration of the One Stop Shop service currently based in the building with the nearby Moreton Library. There has been some delay in agreeing a suitable new location for these staff whilst other options have been considered.
- 4.4 A detailed project plan will be developed in each case with confirmed timescales, and an update will be reported to the next meeting of the Committee.
- 4.5 Preparatory work has begun to prepare Birkenhead Town Hall for use in part to provide office accommodation. Some roof repairs have been undertaken and old fixtures and floor coverings removed. A specification is being developed for necessary electrical and mechanical works, and a specification has been developed and tenders received for a new fire alarm system. At the same time the use of the building for ad-hoc civic and business events has continued, but more intensive use will not be practical until further works have been carried out. Again, it is intended to report to the next meeting of the Committee with estimated timescales.
- 4.6 To support the more intensive use of Wallasey Town Hall schemes have been prepared and agreed for the refurbishment of the existing passenger lift and repairs and accommodation changes to the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor to create open plan accommodation.

A detailed specification has been developed for the previously agreed scheme to install two additional staircases and a second lift (to address issues over means of escape and access) and it is expected to report the outcome of the current tender exercise to Cabinet in November. If approved this scheme is expected to start early in the New Year.

Whilst these matters have been under way other staff moves and building works have been managed on a day to day basis. These have included day to day moves to improve business efficiency and more recently works required to Wallasey Town Hall. They include:

- The consolidation of staff to a smaller area within the North Annexe to create space for a relocation of staff from Cheshire Lines (see below)
- The relocation of Building Control and Planning Teams from Cheshire Lines to the North Annexe.

- Minor staff relocations and reconfiguration of accommodation within Legal Services, Environmental Health and Traffic and Road Safety. In each case the work has been done to improve office layouts and service delivery/efficiency
  - Remodelling of second floor accommodation at Wallasey Town Hall.
- 4.7 In each case these works have been dealt with by existing Asset Management and IT staff.
- 4.8 At its meeting on 26 March 2012 this Committee asked for an update on the consultation being undertaken with local people in Bebington on the future of Pennant House, Mayer Hall and 65 The Village. Following discussions at the Area Forum a group of local people has come forward and agreed to work to develop proposals for the future of these buildings. They have formed a steering group and a limited company – Mayer Community Heritage Trust - and have held a series of meetings to agree their working arrangements and start to formulate ideas. They are now focusing on the development of a business plan with the initial aim of taking a phased transfer of the buildings. At the group's request the Council has agreed to fund the cost of an independent condition survey for the buildings. Support to the group will be by way of officer time, as appropriate.

## **5.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

- 5.1 Risk management for office rationalisation takes place within the governance arrangements of the Strategic Change Programme.

## **6.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 Options for accommodation change are developed and considered within the Strategic Change programme.

## **7.0 CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation is undertaken with staff and services affected by building rationalisation and/or office moves.
- 7.2 Officers will continue to work with Mayer Community Heritage Trust as it develops proposals for the future of Pennant House, Mayer Hall and 65 The Village.

## **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS**

- 8.1 There are no implications in this report for voluntary, community or faith groups.

## **9.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS**

- 9.1 Financial – The rationalisation programme will proceed in line with available capital and revenue resources.
- 9.2 IT Implications. Weekly meeting coordinate the deployment of IT Resources.

9.3 Staffing – none beyond those referred to in the body of this report

9.4 Asset Management implications are dealt with in the body of the report.

## **10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no specific legal implications associated with this report.

## **11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment will be completed for each building identified for closure

## **12.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 Closure of buildings will reduce the Council's CO2 emissions.

## **13.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 There are no specific Planning and Community Safety implications associated with this report.

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## **APPENDICES**

None

## **REFERENCE MATERIAL**

## **SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)**

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Cabinet – Office Accommodation	<b>24<sup>th</sup> June 2010</b>
Cabinet – The Former Birkenhead Town Hall	<b>22<sup>nd</sup> July 2010</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee Office Rationalisation	<b>18<sup>th</sup> November 2010</b>
Cabinet – Office Rationalisation	<b>25<sup>th</sup> November 2010</b>
Cabinet – Capital Programme	<b>21<sup>st</sup> February 2011</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee Office Rationalisation and Agile Working	<b>31<sup>st</sup> January 2011</b>

Cabinet – Capital Programme & Capital Funding	<b>21<sup>st</sup> February 2011</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee Office Rationalisation	<b>16<sup>th</sup> March 2011</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Accommodation Update Report	<b>12<sup>th</sup> July 2011</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Accommodation Update Report	<b>15<sup>th</sup> September 2011</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Accommodation and Agile Working	<b>17<sup>th</sup> November 2011</b>
Cabinet – Office Rationalisation	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> February 2012</b>
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Accommodation Update Report	<b>26<sup>th</sup> March 2012</b>