

WIRRAL COUNCIL

COUNCIL EXCELLENCE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

26 MARCH 2012

SUBJECT:	<i>OFFICE RATIONALISATION UPDATE</i>
WARD/S AFFECTED:	<i>ALL WARDS</i>
REPORT OF:	<i>DIRECTOR OF LAW, HR AND ASSET MANAGEMENT</i>
KEY DECISION?	NO

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Committee on what has been done or is in hand since the Cabinet decision on 2 February 2012 in respect of office rationalisation.
- 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 BACKGROUND AND KEY ISSUES

- 2.1 At its meeting on 2 February Cabinet considered a report on proposals for further rationalisation of administrative accommodation and resolved (Minute 279) that:
 - (1) The Cabinet notes the progress made in vacating and disposing of administrative accommodation;
 - (2) The principles guiding rationalisation and workplace design set out in the report of the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be confirmed as the basis for planning and implementing the vacation of buildings and the intensified use of remaining administrative accommodation;
 - (3) Those buildings listed in Appendix B to the report be retained for use as administrative accommodation and the Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be instructed to report to a future meeting of Cabinet with an action plan for their improvement;
 - (4) Liscard Municipal Building, Bebington Town Hall and Bebington Town Hall Annexe be vacated, declared surplus to the future needs of the Council, demolished and the sites cleared pending future proposals for their re-use;
 - (5) The former Birkenhead Town Hall be re-used in part to provide office accommodation for the Council, within an overall facility that provides meeting and events space and supports community and cultural use;

- (6) An initial series of building works and staff moves be undertaken as proposed in the report;
- (7) The Director of Law, HR and Asset Management be instructed to take the necessary action to progress the vacation and demolition of one of the Annexes and to report further to the Cabinet on the options for the remaining building;
- (8) In respect of the Pennant House complex Cabinet recognises the important role that Pennant House, Mayer Hall and 65 The Village play in the cultural heritage of the Borough;
- (9) The Cabinet believes that these buildings should be maintained to a satisfactory level to allow the public, voluntary organisations etc to continue to use and enjoy them;
- (10) The Cabinet will welcome any proposals from the community to take responsibility for running these buildings under the Council's asset transfer policy;
- (11) The public of Bebington has made it clear that it wishes the One Stop Shop to continue to operate from Pennant House and the Cabinet supports wholeheartedly this view; and
- (12) Officers continue to consult with residents and local community groups with a view to agreeing a development plan for these buildings.

2.2 Since the decision the following actions have been undertaken or are in hand:

- 2.2.1 The project plan for office rationalisation is being reviewed and updated
- 2.2.2 Further work is being done on options for the relocation of staff from the Old Courthouse building in Wallasey.
- 2.2.3 As part of the process of vacating Liscard Municipal Building work is being done (involving the affected services) on options for relocation
- 2.2.4 Proposals for vacation of Bebington Town Hall are being developed
- 2.2.5 Work has begun to develop a programme of works for Birkenhead Town Hall.
- 2.2.6 Staff in the Marketing and Tourism teams have been moved out of the North Annexe and into Wallasey Town Hall. The timing of this move was driven by service need, but it contributes to the vacation of the North Annexe.
- 2.2.7 The future of the Pennant House complex of buildings in Bebington was discussed at the Bebington and Clatterbridge Area Forum on 7 February 2012. At that meeting a motion was moved asking the Council to re-allocate the provision it has made in the Capital Programme for the relocation of the One Stop Shop. The meeting asked that this funding instead be made available for the refurbishment of Pennant House, Mayer Hall and 65 The Village. Following the Area Forum meeting a number of people volunteered to be part of a working group to develop proposals for the future

use of the Pennant House complex. The first meeting of that group took place on 14 March, and further meetings are planned. The group will be supported by officers in its work.

3.0 RELEVANT RISKS

3.1 Risks for office rationalisation are managed and monitored through the project management arrangements within the Strategic Change Programme. The project risk register is being reviewed and updated following the Cabinet decision.

4.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4.1 Not applicable. Cabinet considered options and decided upon a preferred way forward.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation will be undertaken with affected staff as office moves are implemented.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND FAITH GROUPS

6.1 Opportunities will be explored for inclusion of voluntary, community and faith groups in the development of proposals for the Pennant House complex.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: FINANCIAL; IT; STAFFING; AND ASSETS

7.1 None arising directly from this report.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 None arising directly from this report.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Has the potential impact of your proposal(s) been reviewed with regard to equality?

(b) No because there is no relevance to equality.

10.0 CARBON REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None arising directly from this report.

11.0 PLANNING AND COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None arising directly from this report.

12.0 RECOMMENDATION

12.1 That the report be noted.

13.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

13.1 The report responds to a request for an update on progress.

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APPENDICES

None

REFERENCE MATERIAL

None

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Cabinet – Office Accommodation	24 June 2010
Cabinet – The Former Birkenhead Town Hall	22 July 2010
Cabinet – Office Rationalisation	25 November 2010
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Rationalisation and Agile Working	31 January 2011
Cabinet – Capital Programme & Capital Funding	21 February 2011
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Accommodation Update Report	12 July 2011
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Rationalisation - Update Report	15 September 2011
Council Excellence Overview & Scrutiny Committee – Office Rationalisation and Agile Working	17 November 2011
Cabinet – Office Rationalisation	2 February 2012