

# **Report to Stronger Council Committee**

**Date of meeting: 20<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**Portfolio:** Leader (Councillor C Whitbread)

**Subject:** Accommodation update

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## **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

**That the Committee note the summary of progress on the Accommodation Programme as at 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 when this report was written and any verbal updates.**

## **Executive Summary**

1. In line with current government guidance the use of the new Civic space is still restricted to essential workers only. These are employees whose role means they need to be in the building such as facilities management, business support and ICT service desk. Specific members meeting are now being held in the Civic under Covid conditions. Work is being completed to align to the expected changes to working restrictions from the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
2. Familiarisation briefings for managers have been completed. The familiarisation sessions have focused on the Our Ways of Working messages. This covers how we will be working going forward, and a complete A-Z of everything that employees need to know. The plan is now for team managers to brief their teams and ensure everyone is ready for the new ways of working as the Covid restrictions are lifted. This will not mean a return to the office for everyone. It is expected that people will mainly operate in a hybrid mode, sometime in the office, sometimes at home, and sometimes at other locations, or working out in the field.
3. Familiarisation briefings for Members and customer service staff are being arranged to complete prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> July 2021.
4. Several other physical moves have also been completed, including moving the community safety team back in the first floor of 323.
5. The clearing of the Conder building has seen a huge effort and is in the very final stages. This continues to highlight that as a council we can contribute towards the climate change emergency, by relying less on paper by streamlining services and also storing data and documents within the cloud.
6. Work on the welcome area is on track for completion prior to the space being opened up to the public on the 19<sup>th</sup> July. There is a visitor management system and digital signage to assist members of the public to find the right place to get the help they need.
7. Community Hub – Preparations are underway for the opening of the Community Hub. A provisional opening has been set for the 16<sup>th</sup> August subject to final agreement with the partners on the 2<sup>nd</sup> August.

8. ICT have completed the majority of the tasks associated with the accommodation programme. The remaining issues to resolve before opening of the Civic building to the public 19 July are linked to the Welcome area and Community Hub which will be completed W/C 12 July.
9. We are in the very late stages of agreeing Heads of Terms for a lease of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor to a tenant who is a franchise partner and who will be trading as an internationally known brand. This deal will be put to Cabinet by way of a Cabinet Paper for the 26<sup>th</sup> July Meeting.
10. The teams have reduced the amount of paper and storage required as part of a Scrap it, Sort it, Sift it campaign. For what remains, an archiving and storage is being sort off site as part of a new contracted service.
11. New printing services are being introduced that will mean the old, large printers can be fully decommissioned and the volume of onsite printing will be dramatically reduced.
12. Following on from a positive meeting with Essex libraries, a further tour of the space is being planned and arranged for August 2021 to discuss and explore further conversations of the utilisation of the space available.
13. The project is now ready for a formal closure, and any remaining issues will be addressed as business as usual. Now that the physical build is complete, it is expected that a new project to ensure the building is used as intended and delivers the flexible working required will be initiated.

**Reason for decision:** No decision required.

**Legal and Governance Implications:**

There are no legal or governance implications arising from the recommendations of this report. However, any implications arising from actions to achieve specific objectives or benefits will be identified by the responsible Service Director.

**Safer, Cleaner, Greener Implications:**

There are no implications arising from the recommendations of this report in respect of the Council's commitment to the Climate Local Agreement, the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, or any crime and disorder issues with the district. Relevant implications arising from actions to achieve specific objectives or benefits will be identified by the responsible Service Director.

**Consultation Undertaken:**

Programme updates provided to:  
Leadership Team  
Overview & Scrutiny Committee  
Stronger Council Select committee

**Background Papers:**

**Risk Management:**

There are no risk management issues arising from this report. Relevant issues arising from re-planning or actions to achieve specific objectives or benefits will be identified by the responsible service director and communicated to the Corporate Risk Management Group.