

REPORT TO: CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COUNCIL OFFICES, RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

BY: ACTING HEAD OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY

Numbering has been retained from the Office Review for ease of reference.

THE ANNEXE

4.13 Recommendation 1, Annexe Desk Allocation

4.13.1 The Annexe is not operating at its designed capacity following the DBS programme with both the identified fixed and HOT desks not being fully utilised. The Council could increase staff numbers within the Annexe by taking the following steps. Rather than disrupting all staff, decants from satellite buildings would be managed by allocation in the order set out below by reference to service business need and benefits, with a need for options 2 and 3 unlikely at this stage:

1. In the short term: Assigning all of the unallocated desks (15) within the Annexe to staff with flexible work styles to increase capacity by 21. Change the requirement to provide HOT desks to recognise the roll out of mobile ICT equipment during the pandemic. Assign the current 55 HOT desks to staff with either a mobile or flexible working style creating capacity for a further 110 or 78 staff respectively. During stage 1 where additional staffing are moving into the Annexe, desks are allocated on the basis of their workstyle. Consideration should also be given to whether additional collaboration space is required.
2. In the medium term: Designate the remaining 223 desks within the Annexe in line with staff work style of fixed, flexible or mobile.
3. In the long term: Once the new flexible working policy is completed and the workstyles and desk requirements are established, implement a programme to assign all desk space within the Annexe in line with the new policy.

4.14 Recommendation 2, Annexe Meeting Room Requirements

4.14.1 The Council should establish its short to medium term meeting room requirements once the new flexible working policy and supporting ICT provision has been established as part of the stage 2 review.

4.15 Recommendation 3, Increased Capacity of the Annexe

- 4.15.1 In increasing the capacity of the Annexe building, and given new ways of working, the Council should place a higher priority for services to be co-located with connected services rather than for services that were customer facing. Co-location of services is discussed and covered by recommendation 21 of this report at paragraph 5.7.

COUNCIL HQ BUILDING

4.16 Recommendation 4, Council HQ Capacity

- 4.16.1 The Council HQ is not operating at its designed capacity following the DBS programme with both the identified fixed and HOT desks not being fully utilised. The Council could increase staff numbers within the Council HQ by taking the following measures. As with the annexe, steps 2 and 3 are unlikely to be required at this stage:

1. In the short term: Assigning all of the unallocated desks (26) within HQ to staff with flexible work styles to increase capacity by 37. Change the requirement to provide HOT desks to recognise the roll out of mobile ICT equipment during the pandemic. Assign the current 34 HOT desks to staff with either a mobile or flexible working style creating capacity for 68 or 48 staff respectively. During stage 1 moves to the Annexe would be prioritised. Consideration should also be given to whether additional collaboration space is required.
2. In the medium term: Designate the 515 fixed desks in line with the DBS requirements for the work styles of fixed, flexible and mobile to establish a notional capacity. The joint capacity of the Annexe and the HQ building on a 20:80 split of fixed and flexible staff would be 999.
3. Once the new flexible working policy is completed and the workstyles and desk requirements are established, implement a programme to assign all desk space within the Council HQ in line with the new policy.

ROSE COTTAGE

4.17 Recommendation 5 Rose Cottage

- 4.17.1 Recommendations for Rose Cottage are as follows:

1. Rose Cottage should be retained and additional or alternative parking arrangements considered for staff taking children and equipment into the building throughout the working day.
2. Co-location of the Children and Families function at Rose Cottage should be further explored once the Education ASN Review is complete for the possible relocation of activities to Beechbrae.

3. Should a co-location of Children and Families release Rose Cottage then an option appraisal of its use as an office for the Assessors in 234 High Street should be carried out.

BEECHBRAE, ELGIN

4.18 Recommendation 6, Beechbrae Office

- 4.18.1 The Council requires to make adequate provision for children with additional support needs. It is recommended that while the service review is underway that the Council:
1. Retains Beechbrae with the staff and services continuing to be delivered from this location.
 2. In the short term, there is need to review the accommodation for the ASN and SEBN service and consider reasonable interim adaptations to better meet the needs of the children and young people using the service.
 3. Once the Education ASN review has been carried out a further option appraisal should be carried out as to whether the building is suitable for other Service functions or should be declared surplus.

4.19 Recommendation 7, 10 Duffus Road

- 4.19.1 It is recommended that the Council retain 10 Duffus Road, Elgin until the Education ASN review is complete and the requirements for Beechbrae are known. An option appraisal should then be carried out to establish if Beechbrae provides opportunities for co-location of the remaining services, services provided at Rose Cottage and the Assessors in 234 High Street.

CHILD PROTECTION UNIT, HAMILTON DRIVE, ELGIN

4.20 Recommendation 8, Child Protection Unit

- 4.20.1 The Children and Families Access Team should continue to be permanently based within the Child Protection Unit.

17 HIGH STREET, ELGIN

4.21 Recommendation 9, 17 High Street, Elgin

- 4.21.1 The Business Gateway Team should relocate preferably to a Business Hub or if that were not possible to accommodation within the HQ Campus allowing the Council to market the property for sale or lease.

240 HIGH STREET, ELGIN

4.22 Recommendation 10, 240 High Street, Elgin

1. The Council should engage with the Assessors to establish the long-term sustainable plans for their office accommodation within Elgin.
2. The outcome of the Education ASN review will inform whether Rose Cottage and Beechbrae could be considered as part of an option appraisal of accommodating the Assessors in existing council office space.
3. The council should investigate the option of relocating the Registrars from 240 High Street to the HQ Annexe and marketing the ground floor for office or retail space.

9 NORTH GUILDRY STREET, ELGIN

4.23 Recommendation 11, 9 North Guildry Street

4.23.1 The Council should close and sell 9 North Guildry Street to generate a capital receipt. To achieve this:

1. The cost to move/remove the ICT infrastructure should be established and unless costs are prohibitive, removal should be completed.
2. Staff from Barlink and Health & Social Care should relocate to Council HQ.
3. If shift working needs cannot be otherwise addressed, the Home Care Team should relocate to 11 North Guildry Street, Rose Cottage or Cameron Parkbrae.
4. A dedicated ICT Training Room if still required would be sourced within the HQ campus.
5. A desktop valuation indicates a capital receipt in the region of £80k may be possible in suitable market conditions.

11 NORTH GUILDRY, STREET, ELGIN

4.24 Recommendation 12, 11 North Guildry Street, Elgin

4.24.1 11 North Guildry Street should be retained.

CAMERON PARKBRAE, ELGIN

4.25 Recommendation 13, Cameron Parkbrae

4.25.1 A review of the councils out of hours arrangements across all departments should be undertaken. The review should include the requirements for ICT infrastructure and any co-location of teams. This review would establish if the additional office accommodation would be required for out of hours services.

While the out of hours review was being undertaken the office accommodation could be used by the Home Care Team transferring from 9 North Guildry Street provided access arrangements were agreed once the current restrictions are lifted.

MORAY RESOURCE CENTRE, ELGIN

4.26 Recommendation 14, Moray Resource Centre

- 4.26.1 Health and Social Care are currently considering options for the services delivered from the Resource Centre.

This building should be retained until the service review is complete. Depending on the length of the service review, there are options to assign 5 desks to 7 staff operating a flexible work style.

HIGHFIELD HOUSE, ELGIN

4.27 Recommendation 15, Highfield House, Elgin

The relocation of these staff will generate an annual saving of £11k for Health and Social Care Moray, which should in turn create a small saving for the council. There may be financial implications for Elgin Community Surgery, which would require to be considered by the NHS.

The relocation of these staff will generate an annual saving of £11k for Health and Social Care Moray.

9A & 9C SOUTHFIELD, ELGIN

4.28 Recommendation 16, 9a & 9c Southfield, Elgin

- 4.28.1 If the DBS occupancy capacities were to be operated within the HQ Campus there would be sufficient desks to move the Health and Social Care Team and give up the lease of 9a and 9c Southfield.

The relocation of these staff will generate an annual saving of £169k for Health and Social Care Moray, which should in turn create a small saving for the council.

30- 32 HIGH STREET, ELGIN

4.29 Recommendation 17, 30-32 High Street Elgin

- 4.29.1 It is recommended that the Asset Management Group to consider if this building should be declared as surplus following the completion of the short term leases related to the response to the pandemic.

19- 23 HIGH STREET, ELGIN

4.30 Recommendation 18, 19-23 High Street Elgin

- 4.30.1 It is recommended that the property remains leased to a third sector organisation and negotiations on an extension of the lease are undertaken in 2022.

5. OFFICES (out of Elgin)

5.5 Recommendation 19, 13 Cluny Square, Buckie

- 5.5.1 A review should be carried out to establish if the services within 13 Cluny Square could be delivered in Buckie Town House or another location. The approach recently adopted at Forres House should be used as a model.

Depending on whether an alternative location can be identified, a review should be carried out to establish what alterations are required to improve 13 Cluny Square to reach a suitability level of B or above.

5.6 Recommendation 20, Keith Community Hub

- 5.6.1 There are no immediate accommodation options that present themselves to support the relocation of staff to alternative accommodation in Keith. The proposed new build of a health centre in Keith would provide a future opportunity to relocate staff into the centre within a community hub setting.
Note: There should also be some consideration as to whether the staff from Buckie could be co-located in the new Keith Health Centre and this building becomes the main office base in East Moray.

6. CO-LOCATION OF SERVICES

6.6 Recommendation 21, Co-location of Services

- 6.6.1 As part of the stage 2 review, the Council should consider the relocation of front-line services where they work together in terms of delivering customer focused outcomes. To achieve this:
1. The HQ Annexe as an open plan environment would provide a suitable location for co-located services
 2. Co-location is already a feature within offices out of Elgin.

7. SERVICE RE-DESIGN

7.4 Recommendation 22, Service Redesign

- 7.4.1 The Council should embrace the opportunity to redesign services. This can be achieved by:
1. Continuing to invest in ICT infrastructure;
 2. Reviewing the flexible working policy;
 3. Moving more staff into flexible work (where appropriate); and
 4. Making a desk allocation per service linked to an agreed model of flexible working.