

REPORT TO: CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM
SUBJECT: REVIEW OF COUNCIL OFFICES
BY: HEAD OF HOUSING AND PROPERTY

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The first draft of this report was written in September 2019 and while some possible “early wins” have been identified in reviewing this draft, the approach to rationalisation will need a further full-scale review in light of the step change towards remote/flexible working prompted by COVID-19. This, coupled with a shift towards digital/online services, will also change the footprint needed to accommodate the workforce with many potentially able to rotate through the office for half the week or less and while this has not supported any immediate changes, the accommodation required for staff working in this way will be significantly different once social distancing rules are eventually relaxed. A COVID postscript has been added to the end of this report but this will not obviate the need for that full-scale second stage review. However, the work done to prepare this stage 1 report is still valuable in setting the high watermark for assessment, the constraints within each office and the options for change.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide a strategic overview of council offices; how they are used; what opportunities there may be to co-locate services to improve joint working for further investigation; and examine opportunities to reduce operational costs through a programme of rationalisation which includes an early review of what type of office space configuration is required for services’ new ways of working and delivery, to identify any changes which should be considered at this first stage of the office review process and also to flag up issues which will require fuller consideration in the next stage of the review process.
- 1.3 The stage 1 report recommendations are based on there being no social distancing requirements. Separate plans based on previous service usage are available to monitor occupancy while social distancing remains. Should social distancing be reintroduced, this would be managed as part of the stage 2 review but in essence, at both stages staff would again work from home or remotely as required to ensure distancing requirements were met.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 All council offices were visited as part of this review. The methodology used to evaluate the estate was as follows:
- The type of services being delivered at each office;
 - The number of staff based at each location;
 - Desk use within each building;

- How dedicated rooms are utilised (interview/family/conference rooms);
- Opportunities to co-locate services and improve joint working;
- The best strategic options for basing front and back office services;
- Prospects to rationalise existing office provision;
- Options to reduce the Council's operating costs; and
- New technology that enables staff to work in a more flexible manner.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The aim and objective of the office review is to consider how the Council can maximise its use of current office space, reconfigure spaces to meet emerging new ways of working in an agile way pending a full scale post COVID review and if possible, reduce the estate and maximise income or capital receipt from any buildings that will clearly be surplus to requirements moving forward. These aims and objectives are part of the wider review of Property Asset Management set out in the Improvement and Modernisation programme reported to Council on 12 December 2018 the aim of which was to align property assets and their long-term management to council priorities to ensure an affordable and sustainable asset base. If a building is identified as surplus in the office review, a desk top valuation will be provided in order to provide an indication of its value should the Council decide to eventually dispose of the asset.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council delivers a range of public services for the people of Moray. These services are mainly concentrated within an office setting and contact is normally established through face-to-face meetings, letter, email, telephone, as well as service referrals from internal/external services and key stakeholders.
- 4.2 The current flexible working policy was implemented through the Designing Better Services (DBS) programme, which completed in 2015. The roll out of flexible working policies and associated ICT tools enabled the rationalisation of Elgin office accommodation. The refurbished HQ created an additional 149 desk spaces and the new Annexe had 223 desk spaces. The target was 7 desks to 10 staff (70%). Staff were assessed based on 3 work styles of Fixed, Flexible or Mobile and a desk allocation of 1.0, 0.7 or 0.5 assigned respectively.
- 4.3 The roll out of ICT laptops to office staff in response to the lockdown requirements for working at home due to the COVID 19 pandemic means that it is easier for staffing groups to manage the current flexible working policies. The council now has the opportunity to review and assess how many staff need to remain with a fixed workstyle with a fixed desk.

ELGIN AREA OFFICES

- 4.4 In Elgin, there are a total of 16 offices and 1 converted dwelling house that are used to provide Council and Health and Social Care Services.

ELGIN OFFICES	CORE FUNCTION	OFFICE STATUS
HQ Annexe	Customer Services (mixed services)	Owned by Council
Council HQ	Back Office functions	Owned by Council
Rose Cottage	Children and Families Social Work	Owned by Council
Beechbrae	SEBN & Children and Families	Owned by Council
Child Protection Unit	Child Protection (multi-agency)	NHS/Police/Council
17 High Street, Elgin	Business Gateway	Owned by Council
240 High Street, Elgin	Registrars & Marriage Room	Owned by Council
9 North Guildry Street,	Health and Social Care	Owned by Council
11 North Guildry Street,	Criminal Justice	Owned by Council
Cameron Parkbrae	Housing Services	Owned by Council
Moray Resource Centre	Health and Social Care	Owned by Council
Highfield	Health and Social Care	Private Lease
9a Southfield	Health and Social Care	Private Lease
9c Southfield	Health and Social Care	Private Lease
30-32 High Street	Temp COVID capacity for Social Justice and then will be vacant	Owned by Council
19-23 High Street	Lease ending and will be Vacant	Owned by Council

THE ANNEXE

4.5 The Annexe was designed as the main base for customer facing services and includes a sizeable customer waiting area with access point and interview facilities. A further breakdown of the building includes:

- 5 dedicated desks at the Customer Access Point;
- 218 desk spaces (55 of these Hot Desks);
- 6 interview rooms;
- 7 meeting rooms;
- 3 Quiet rooms; and
- 2 Training rooms.

4.6 Services currently based within the HQ Annexe include:

- Customer Access Team;
- Housing Services;
- Revenues/Benefits;
- OD Teams: SWTT, Corporate Training and Corporate Health and Safety Team;
- Access Team (MIJB); and
- Environmental Services/Trading Standards/Money Advice.

4.7 At the time of writing the original report (September 2019), there were 223 desks available within the Annexe. Of these, 5 were dedicated for customer services staff at the access point. The main working office includes 218 desks. Of these, 163 were classified as “fixed provision” and 55 were classified as HOT Desks. The concept of HOT desks was to allow those staff who worked flexible/mobile workstyles to have access to a desk when they were required to do office related tasks (i.e. write reports/update files/etc.). The HOT desks are 1200mm wide

against the fixed desk width of 1600mm wide. An assessment of the numbers, ICT and storage configuration of these desks is currently being undertaken. Within the fixed desk provision, there were a total of 15 desks unallocated.

HOT desks

- 4.8 The use of hot desks was monitored over a 3-month period. An average of 20 staff per day used these desks of a regular basis.
- 4.9 The roll out of laptops and mobile phones to staff as a response to the requirements of the pandemic lockdown and the need to work from home means that the concept of having HOT desks within the Annexe needs to be re-examined. The mobile working style carried a requirement for 0.5 desk space per member of staff. With the majority of office staff with mobile ICT equipment this would in theory allow the current 55 HOT desks to serve 110 staff with mobile work styles, a substantial increase from the observed 20 staff previously using these desks. An audit has been carried out to capture any additional storage or desk layout adjustments required to bring the HOT desks in line with fixed desks within the building.

Fixed Desks

- 4.10 The 163 desks within the Annexe are not operating in line with the Designing Better Services (DBS) standard of 0.7 desk space per flexible working style and 1.0 desk space per fixed working style. There are currently 15 desks unallocated which if allocated to flexible working style staff would create immediate capacity for 21 additional staff.

Proposed Desk Designation

- 4.11 It is proposed that the designation of fixed and hot desks is removed and that the 223 desks in the Annexe are assigned on the basis of fixed, flexible or mobile. To give an indication of the capacity of the Annexe if the Pareto principle is used where 20% of the desks are fixed and 80% are flexible, a capacity for the Annexe could be set. Using this principle as an interim position, the staff allocation would be 47 fixed and 264 flexible staff giving an overall capacity of 311 staff in the Annexe. This would support decants from satellite buildings. The 47 fixed workstyle desks would be sufficient to accommodate those currently working in the Annexe under the lockdown conditions and the Access Point staff.

Post-COVID Flexible Working

- 4.12 The new flexible working policy will examine whether the DBS occupancy assessments for mobile and flexible work styles needs to be revised following the roll out of ICT equipment to all fixed and flexible work style staff. If the 0.5 and 0.7 were reduced or amalgamated then this would alter the occupancy rates of all office spaces particularly on the HQ campus. Given the scale of decants reasonably anticipated at stage 1, there would still be some flexibility to consider creating additional collaboration space beyond that already provided in the Annexe if density was adjusted in this way, although in the short term this would not involve structural changes.

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.

Customer Footfall

4.13.2 Customer Services record the footfall of all service users who call at the HQ Annexe to request a service. The data presented in this report covers the period 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2019 and records the total number of interactions (those who came into the office to request a service); the number of enquiries resolved at Access Point (enquiries resolved at first contact); and those referred on to service (normally the more complicated enquiries requiring specialist input).

Services	Footfall from 1 Jan to 31 Dec 2019		
	Total interactions	Resolved at A/ Point	Referred on to Service
Housing Services	6,281	4,506	1,775
Benefits	3,576	3,338	238
Council Tax	2,513	2,307	206
Licences/Permits/Permissions	447	388	59
Payments	338	338	-
Community Advice	298	298	-
Planning/Building Control	260	16	244
Environmental Health	194	158	36
Business Rates	106	78	28
Parking/Car Parks	86	72	14
Rubbish and Recycling	48	46	2
Trading Standards	47	40	7
Customer Services	30	28	2
Private Housing	24	5	19
Roads and Payments	23	18	5
Follow up calls	22	17	5
Complaints	9	-	9
Politicians/Elections/democracy	4	2	2
Land and Property	4	1	3
Street care and cleaning	3	3	-
Public/Community Transport	1	1	-
-	14,314	11,660	2,654

Source: Customer Services Footfall Report

4.13.3 Housing Services, benefits and Council Tax are the most requested customer services. The Housing Service has the highest number of onward referrals.

4.13.4 Customer Services and the interaction of how members of the public contact the Council continues to evolve with the roll out of digital services and the recent example of locally transferring customer contact to the library in Forres. Customer contact will remain a requirement within the Annexe and therefore no major reconfigurations of the access point is proposed at this stage.

Meeting Rooms/Training Rooms/Quiet Rooms

4.13.5 There are 6 public interview rooms, 7 meeting rooms, 2 Training Rooms and 4 quiet rooms in the Annexe. The use of these rooms were monitored through the calendar booking system over a 3-month period to establish their levels of use:

Interview Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	4	Housing Service	62%	38%	53%
2	4	All	45%	55%	
3	3	Housing Service	55%	45%	
4	3	All	29%	71%	
5	3	All	41%	59%	
6	3	All	51%	49%	

Meeting Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	10	Shared	62%	38%	39%
2	10	Shared	63%	37%	
3	10	Shared	58%	42%	
4	10	Shared	60%	40%	
5	10	Shared	61%	39%	
6	10	Shared	63%	37%	
7	10	Shared	60%	40%	

Training Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	20	Shared	44%	56%	49%
2	40	Shared	58%	42%	

Quiet Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	5	Shared	24%	76%	82%
2	3	Shared	24%	76%	
3	-	Key Store (Facilities)	-		
4	3	Shared	5%	95%	
5	3	Shared	No data	No data	

4.13.6 The percentage of room use from the adopted method of measuring occupancy shows that these are currently under-utilised. However, staff feedback is that there is a difficulty in booking meeting rooms in the Annexe and therefore alternative methods of measuring occupancy are under consideration.

4.13.7 The pandemic and the move to more Video Conference (VC) meetings is likely to change the requirement and configuration of meeting rooms across the office estate. With the use of headsets, it is anticipated that taking part in VC meetings in the office space would be no more disruptive to surrounding staff than talking on the telephone. Where discussing confidential items the meeting may more appropriately be carried out in a small meeting room or scheduled for a home working day where this affords greater privacy. The new flexible working policy

will detail the requirements of video conference meetings and ICT provision of supporting software and hardware.

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.

Opportunity to Co-locate Services

4.14.2 When the original design concept for the Annexe (an operating base for customer services) is considered against customer footfall and current services occupying the HQ Annexe, it shows that some services based in this building have either minimal or no contact with service users. If the Council were so minded, it could use the office review as an opportunity to co-locate services where there are clear inter-dependencies; where services often need to work together; and where there are staff currently doing similar roles but in different services. The opportunities for further investigation will be considered in Section 6 of this report.

HQ Annexe - Property Elements

4.14.3 The last survey of office buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		A
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all elements		£0
Operating Budget for 2020/21	=	£277,903

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

4.15.2 After the HQ Annexe opened in 2010, Council HQ was re-designated as an office that would support back office functions and support staff. Council HQ includes:

- 81 rooms across a 3 storey building;
- 537 desk spaces (of these, 32 are Hot Desks and 20 Elected Members);
- 11 meeting rooms;
- Male/female/disabled toilets;
- Council Chambers; and
- 2 CMT Hub Meeting Rooms.

4.15.3 Services currently based within Council HQ include:

1st Floor

- Mail Room (Customer Services);
- ICT Team;
- Consultancy;
- Public Transport Unit;
- Print Room
- Financial Services;
- Human Resources;
- Legal Services
- Member Rooms;
- Committee Services; and
- Community Access Team.

2nd Floor

- Property Services;
- Housing Directorate;
- Housing Rents Team;
- Roads;
- Planning;
- Building Control;
- Community Safety Team;
- Education;
- Education (Admin Support)
- Education/ASB/Children Services Directorate;
- Community Support Unit;
- Corporate Management Team; and
- Council Chambers.

3rd Floor

- Finance/Procurement/Payroll;
- Unison Office; and
- Corporate Resources (above chambers) – RIOs/Complaints/PMO.

4.15.4 There are 537 staff desks available in Council HQ. This includes 22 workstations for Elected Members. Of those desks available to staff, 481 are classified as “fixed” and 34 as HOT desks. Within the fixed desk provision, there were 26 desks vacant/unallocated at the time the review was completed. Unlike the Annexe the desk arrangements for the HOT desks in the HQ building were made through the use of existing furniture. A review of the numbers and configuration of the original HOT desks identified is being carried out.

HOT desks

4.15.5 The use of the 34 HOT desks were monitored over a 3-month period and this showed a similar use pattern to that in the Annexe. There were, however, many days where HOT desks were not occupied with others only used for part of the

working day. Based on the figures gathered, it would be safe to assume that an average of 20 staff per day would require HOT desk provision but within Council HQ, this may not be necessary near their parent service.

- 4.15.6 The roll out of laptops and mobile phones to staff as a response to the requirements of the pandemic lockdown and the need to work from home means that the concept of having HOT desks within the Council HQ needs to be re-examined. The mobile working style carried a requirement for 0.5 desk space per member of staff. With the majority of office staff with mobile ICT equipment this would allow the current 34 HOT desks to serve 68 staff with mobile work styles, a substantial increase.

Fixed Desks

- 4.15.7 The 481 desks within the Council HQ are not operating in line with the Designing Better Services (DBS) standard of 0.7 desk space per flexible working style and 1.0 desk space per fixed working style. If 385 of these fixed desk spaces were designated for flexible work styles this would give a capacity of 546 staff. There are currently 26 desks unallocated which if allocated to flexible working style staff would create immediate capacity for 37 additional staff.

Proposed Desk Designation

- 4.15.8 It is proposed that the designation of fixed and hot desks is removed and that the 515 desks in the HQ Building are assigned on the basis of fixed, flexible or mobile. To give an indication of the capacity of the HQ Building if the Pareto principle is used where 20% of the desks are fixed and 80% are flexible, a capacity for the HQ Building could be set. Using this principle as an interim position the staff allocation would be 103 fixed and 585 flexible staff giving an overall capacity of 688 staff in the HQ Building. This would support decants from satellite buildings. As with the Annexe, consideration should be given to whether additional collaboration space is required.

Post-COVID Flexible Working

- 4.15.9 The new flexible working policy will examine whether the DBS occupancy assessments for mobile and flexible work styles needs to be revised following the roll out of ICT equipment to all fixed and flexible work style staff. If the 0.5 and 0.7 were reduced or amalgamated then this would alter the occupancy rates of all office spaces particularly on the HQ campus.

Meeting Rooms

- 4.15.10 There are 13 meeting rooms in Council HQ. The use of these rooms were monitored through the calendar booking system over a 3-month period to establish their levels of use. The comments at 4.13.6 and 4.13.7 made regarding meeting rooms in the annexe apply equally to HQ.

Meeting Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
136	3	Shared	22%	78%	57%
101a	8	Health/Social Care	No data	-	
200a	6	Shared	20%	80%	
200b	6	Shared	34%	76%	
201	20	Shared	54%	46%	
231b	4	Shared	43%	57%	
236	8	Shared	59%	41%	
239	10	Shared	61%	39%	
301	10	Shared	37%	63%	
301a	4	Shared	42%	58%	
311	6	Customer Services	No data	-	
203	Hub 1	Corporate	32%	68%	
203a	Hub 2	Corporate	27%	73%	

HQ Main Building - Property Elements

4.15.11 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all building elements		£168,743
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£319,444

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

4.16.2 This building is occupied by the Placement Services of Children and Families Social Work. The remainder of Children and Families are based or operate from 10 Duffus Road and Beechbrae, Elgin. Rose Cottage includes:

Ground floor

- Reception Area;
- 2 x Interview Rooms;;
- An open plan office (ground floor)
- A breakout room;
- Large Conference Room;
- 3 family contact rooms;
- Male/female/disabled toilets;
- Shower room;
- Boiler room;
- Cleaners store; and
- 2 kitchens.

1st Floor

- 4 offices; and
- Male/female toilets.

4.16.3 There are currently 35 desks but only 21 desk spaces are currently being occupied. The remainder of Children and Families are based in Beechbrae, Elgin.

4.16.4 Placement Services based in Rose Cottage are visited by young people who can drop in during office hours without an appointment. The use of the 2 interview rooms have not been recorded but discussions with staff suggest that these rooms are considered to be under-used. It was, however, possible to monitor the use of other rooms:

Breakout Room	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	4	Social Work	19%	81%	81%
Contact Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	
1	4	Social Work	52%	48%	64%
2	6	Social Work	28%	72%	
3	6	Social Work	27%	73%	

Conference Room	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	14	Social Work	35%	65%	65%

- 4.16.5 The layout of the building was purpose designed for the service during the implementation of the DBS programme. Rose Cottage is currently under-occupied and the support rooms are equally so.
- 4.16.6 The service have identified that the use of Rose Cottage was made problematic by the lack of parking there. The workers were unable to get a space at times within the car park and ended up parking some distance away, having to then walk with children and equipment for contact. At times workers were only dropping children off and needed to park for a short while and had to pay to do so. There was a designated parking space but staff complained it was often unavailable. It became such a big issue that staff stopped using the facility.
- 4.16.7 The service have looked at the contact services provided at 10 Duffus Road to establish if these could be transferred to Rose Cottage. 10 Duffus Road has a domestic kitchen and external garden area where staff are able to monitor parents contact with children to establish their ability to provide and maintain a meaningful relationship. Rose Cottage does not provide the domestic internal and external garden environment and there is no space adjacent to the building to develop these facilities.
- 4.16.8 The Service Workforce Development Plan is seeking to have the through care team co-located with the children's services team as they too have visitors to the office in high levels of distress or under the influence.
- 4.16.9 The services delivered from Rose Cottage, 10 Duffus Road and Beechbrae could benefit from being co-located. The requirements of the services delivered from 10 Duffus Road mean that the co-location could not be accommodated at Rose Cottage or the HQ Campus. The services could potentially be accommodated at Beechbrae once the Education ASN review has taken place should it identify its services could be moved out. If following the Education ASN review Beechbrae was not suitable then an alternative site or building out with the Councils current assets would be required.
- 4.16.10 Should the Education ASN review allow a co-location that released Rose Cottage then an option appraisal would be carried out to establish if the building would be suitable for the Assessors to allow 234 High Street to be vacated.
- Rose Cottage - Property Elements
- 4.16.11 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard for all building elements		£100,564
Operating Budget for 2020/21	=	£30,776

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

4.17.2 This building operates as an ASN and SEBN base for primary school children across Moray, and is also occupied by the Sensory Education service, English as Additional Language, Educational Psychology, Early Years Education Service and Children and Families Social Work. The building includes:

Ground floor

- Reception Area;
- 15 offices;
- 3 meeting rooms;
- Male/female/disabled toilets; and
- The SEBN base and associated classroom space.

First Floor

- Education Reception Area/Admin Team;
- Conference Room;
- Duty Room;
- 11 offices;
- Toilet provision; and
- Photocopy room.

SEBN Base

- 4.17.3 Beechbrae is not a suitable building for SEBN provision. The accommodation does not meet modern educational standards and does not provide a learning space that is suited to the needs of the children who access the service and as a result this requires the management of a number of risks. For example, the SEBN “safe” room is not suitable and cannot be used for young people in distress due to health and safety concerns. The building does not promote a positive and safe place of learning and there are a number of issues that should be considered with some degree of priority if the service is to remain located in Beechbrae for the medium term. These include the physical layout of rooms, privacy issues and the security of egress from the unit within the building.
- 4.17.4 A review of the Additional Support Needs service is underway and options are being considered, which could increase local deployment of some staff. It may be an option to locate some staff within the school estate, which would reduce the occupancy of Beechbrae. There could also be an option to make provision for pupils within each ASG. However, there are also pressures on the learning estate and this may in itself create a requirement for additional accommodation and so this possible option will be weighed up as part of the business case as the Review progresses. The ASN Review is likely to be a long-term project carried out over an extended period of time, consequently, the SEBN base at Beechbrae and accommodation for staff is likely to be required for some time pending the implementation of the review once agreed. The outcome of the review is linked with the opportunities for co-location opportunities at Rose Cottage and 10 Duffus Road, also considered in this report.
- 4.17.5 The reconfiguration of SEBN at Beechbrae could impact only part of the Children and Families in residence. This could vary depending on the timescale for implementation, but at this point they currently include:
- 22.4 FTE social workers (24 staff);
 - 5.2 Family Support Workers (8staff);
 - 5 admin staff (6 staff);
 - 3.6 Social Work Review Officers (share 2 desks);
 - 3.8 secretaries attached to the Review Team; and
 - 2 Project Workers Moray Youth Justice (both part-time).
- 4.17.6 A desktop valuation of Beechbrae for a sale as a development site indicates a value of £300k.
- 4.17.7 Customer interaction with the Children’s and Families officers is normally received by telephone, email or letter. Very rarely are child protection concerns reported in person. The use of rooms was monitored over a one month period and the information gathered is typical in terms of the current use of such rooms within Children and Families.

Conference Room	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	4	Social Work	41%	49%	49%

Duty Room	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	2	Social Work	25%	75%	75%

Meeting Rooms	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	2	Social Work	28%	72%	68%
2	2	Social Work	36%	64%	

Beechbrae - Property Elements

4.17.8 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition	B
Property Suitability	B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard for all building elements is	£210,159
Operating Costs for 2020/21	£31,843

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.**

10 DUFFUS ROAD, ELGIN

4.18.2 This is a converted house (adjacent to Beechbrae) with a desktop value in the region of £130k. There have been some internal modifications inside the property and it would be difficult to sell in its current condition. The property is used mainly as 2 family contact rooms and 2 autism rooms. Children and Families use 2 contact rooms at 10 Duffus Road, Elgin. The following average use was calculated.

Contact Room	Capacity	Service	% of use	% of Under use	% of under use (all)
1	4	Social Work	25%	75%	74%
2	4	Social Work	28%	72%	

Source: All of the figures for Beechbrae and Duffus Road were provided by the Social Work Service Manager

4.18.3 Support rooms in Beechbrae and 10 Duffus Road are currently under-utilised.

4.18.4 10 Duffus Road has a domestic kitchen and external garden area where staff are able to monitor parents contact with children to establish their ability to provide and maintain a meaningful relationship. This type of domestic environment is not provided elsewhere in the Elgin office estate and is seen as a key requirement for the service. If this building were vacated then this facility would be required at the new location.

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

4.19.2 This unit is located in Hamilton Drive adjacent to Beechbrae. It is a specialised unit owned by the Council, NHS Grampian and Police (Scotland). They collectively work in partnership to investigate child protection enquires. The Council has access to 11 desks with staff working flexibly and is currently occupied by:

- 8.6 FTE social works (9 staff);
- 3 FTE admin workers; and
- 3.7 FTE support workers (5 staff).

To ensure best practice and effective joint working, the Children and Families Access Team should continue to be based within the Child Protection Unit.

Child Protection Unit - Property Elements

4.19.3 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition	B
Property Suitability	B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard	Survey Required
Operating Budget for 2019/20 (Council share) =	£32,674

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

4.20.2 This is a small office located near the HQ campus and is used by the Business Gateway Team. The building consists of:

- A main office (space for only 3 desks);
- Toilet;
- Store;
- Kitchen;
- Meeting room; and
- Office/Meeting Room (suitable for 1 desk and small meeting area).

4.20.3 The building is occupied by 2 staff; it is fit for purpose and meets the requirements of the service. No details are kept with regards to the use of the interview/meeting room. The office is open Monday to Friday and currently has a meeting room.

4.20.4 The service are currently actively exploring options to relocate the Business Gateway Team to a Business Hub at a different location operated with economic partners of the council, this being a forerunner to the Business Enterprise Hub to be created as part of Moray Growth Deal.

4.20.5 The current economic impact of the pandemic means that the lease or sale of this building for office or retail space could be impacted in the short term until there is a more sustained recovery. It is likely that any shared costs for the transfer of this service to a business hub would not be immediately recovered from the building becoming vacant but in the medium to long term it is hoped that options could be identified as part of the Elgin Town Centre Master Planning process and related recovery activity.

17 High Street - Property Elements

4.20.6 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition	B
Property Suitability	A
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard for building elements is	£30,107
Operating Costs (excluding building insurance) 2020/21 =	£5,145

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

4.21.2 This building is currently occupied by the Registrars, Skills Development Scotland and the Assessors.

4.21.3 The Assessors occupy the top floor of the building on the basis of an agreement drawn up as part of the Local Government reorganisation in 1996. The Council are obliged to provide accommodation for the Assessors at nil rent. Should the Council wish to move the assessors in order to sell the building then the Council would be obliged to provide alternative accommodation at nil rent.

4.21.4 The location of the Assessors is key to the options that are available for this building. The options that are available to the council are:

- Assessors remain in the building
- Assessors are accommodated elsewhere in the Councils office estate
- Assessors move to a new facility with funding agreed with the Joint Board.

4.21.5 This office review does give the opportunity for the Assessors function to be accommodated within office space that could be vacated by other services following this review. If Rose Cottage was vacated then it would provide a similar sized floor area in a ground floor central location within Elgin. Alternatively, if accommodation became available within Beechbrae then this would provide ground floor accommodation allowing easier disabled access. Both these options would be dependent on the outcome of the Education ASN review and any co-location options for Children and Families.

4.21.6 The accommodation currently occupied by the Assessors is of poor quality, does not meet their needs and does not provide a ground floor access for members of the public with a disability. The joint board who manage the Assessors have, in the past, considered options to provide a long-term solution to their accommodation needs in Elgin.

4.21.7 Skills Development Scotland currently have a 5-year lease of part of the building, which has come to end and is currently being renegotiated. The current negotiations are to extend that lease for another 5 years. A break option can be considered to provide flexibility.

4.21.8 The part of the building used by the Registrars to register births/deaths and marriages consists of:

- Reception area;
- Interview Room;
- Marriage Room (can accommodate up to 60 guests);
- Kitchen;
- Male/female/disabled toilets;
- Repository (used to keep files); and
- Office for the Senior Registrar.

4.21.9 There are 5 staff based at this location. If the service were to relocate, they would require interview facilities. The building includes a marriage room but there is no legal obligation on the Council to provide this service. Over the last two years, the total income generated from marriages in this room was £413 in 2018 and £1,955 in 2019.

4.21.10 The Registrars could be accommodated within the HQ Annexe if the Council were so minded. The Service also has links with other services identified for co-location as part of the office review. The monitoring of interview facilities within the HQ Annexe also shows that interview facilities would be available for this service if they were to move.

240 High Street - Property Elements

4.21.11 Desktop asset valuation for possible sale needs updated, however is currently indicated at £227k. The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard of all building elements		£44,165
Operating Costs 2020/21	=	£9,800

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 GILDREY STREET, ELGIN

4.22.1 The building consists of 5 offices.

- Office 1 – is occupied by 3 staff from a Service Provider (Barlink);
- Office 2 – is occupied by 6 business support staff (MIJB);
- Office 3 – is occupied by 8.5 support staff (MIJB);
- Office 4 – is occupied by the Homecare Team (3 desks/staff work shifts);
- Office 5 – is an ICT Training Room (6 ICT points/5 desks).

Barlink staff

4.22.2 Barlink is a housing project for people with learning difficulties. Barlink has no office provision onsite so the service operates from 9 North Guildry Street. It is a registered housing support service with the Care Inspectorate.

Health and Social Care (Business Support)

4.22.3 The 8.5 support staff can be accommodated within the space, which can be made available within Council HQ.

Home Care Team

4.22.4 The Home Care Team (10 staff with normally 5 staff in work at any time) occupy a partitioned office (off office 3). This room is not fit for purpose and the service should be prioritised for a move into more suitable accommodation. If out of hours shifts cannot be accommodated within homeworking periods, any accommodation provided must take account of the shift work this team performs. 11 North Guildry Street, Rose Cottage and Cameron Parkbrae are buildings which could provide services up to 22.30 for the later shift staff.

ICT Training Facility

4.22.5 A dedicated room is used within the building for corporate ICT training. The occupancy and usage has not been scoped out and it is not known if a separate dedicated room is required or the need can be met by the existing training rooms within the HQ campus. As part of the new ways of working a review of the training requirements of implementing new digital technologies should be carried out.

4.22.6 The ICT infrastructure serving 9 and 11 North Guildry Street terminates in number 9, therefore costs of moving or removing this would require to be established before consideration of any proposal to vacate the either building.

4.22.7 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		-
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard		Survey Required
Operating Costs 2020/21	=	£18,065

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

4.23.2 The property is occupied by staff from the Criminal Justice Team, Drug and Alcohol and NHS Grampian. The building consists of:

- Reception area (with 2 staff);
- Office 1 (main office with approx. 16.5 staff);
- Office 2 (with 1 member of staff);
- Office 3 (with 6 NHS nursing staff and 1 empty desk);
- Office 4 (2 staff – Drug and Alcohol Team);
- Office 5 (1 NHS Doctor);
- Office 6 (1 NHS Secretary); and
- 5 x interview rooms.

4.23.3 The Social Work Team (including out of hours service) also occupy this building and view this to be the most appropriate location as they have close contact with social work colleagues. The only real cost they incur out of hours is heating and lighting.

4.23.4 The service supports the criminal justice system and see clients who fall into this system. The office location is close to the HQ campus and Police (Scotland). The accommodation also includes NHS staff and this can be of assistance where service clients turn up for appointments under the influence of drink or drugs. The location and accommodation are reasonably well suited to service needs.

4.23.5 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		-
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard		Survey Required
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£22,351

4.24 **Recommendation 12, 11 North Guildry Street, Elgin**

4.24.1 **11 North Guildry Street should be retained.**

CAMERON PARKBRAE, ELGIN

- 4.24.2 This is a purpose built property that provides accommodation for homeless households. It includes 2 offices one of which is currently vacant.
- 4.24.3 The empty office space on the first floor is a replica of the ground floor flat and with the addition of a bathroom and bedroom partitioning could be converted to provide homeless accommodation. The conversion to a flat would attract a rent of £6364 per annum and would provide suitable homeless accommodation. The capital cost to convert the space into a flat is £34,000.
- 4.24.4 Alternatively, the empty office could accommodate up to 5 staff and the building is accessible 24/7. Given the availability of this accommodation, the office could be used by staff who monitor shift type works (e.g. Home Care Team) and staff working out of normal working hours and weekends (e.g. Social Work Out of Hours Teams). If this option was pursued further discussion on access arrangements would be required once current restrictions are lifted.
- 4.24.5 Over many years, the Out of Hours arrangements for the whole Council have incrementally been added to what was originally the Homelessness out of hours service provided at Cameron Parkbrae. The arrangements and responsibilities for out of hours services within the council are disjointed and a review of the out of hours services across all departments is required which would inform any accommodation requirements
- 4.24.6 All costs relating to Cameron Parkbrae are currently coded to the Homelessness Budget (Temporary Accommodation) so there would be no direct budget implications involved in relocating staff to this location.

Property Condition		C
Property Suitability		B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all building elements		£127,763
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£35,044

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

4.25.2 The Moray Resource Centre is owned by the Council and used by staff from Health and Social Care. The building includes:

- 4 Offices;
- 1 interview room;
- Kitchen area; and
- Male/female/disabled toilets.

4.25.3 The following staff occupy the Resource Centre:

- Office 1 has 6 desks (8 staff with 4 part-time) and one desk vacant;
- Office 2 has 2 desks (2 staff) but 1 of these also manages Phoenix Centre;
- Office 3 has 5 desks (2 staff) and 3 desks vacant; and
- Office 4 has 4 desks (4 staff with 2 part-time) and 1 vacant desk vacant.

4.25.4 There is no robust data to record the use of the interview room.

4.25.5 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all building elements		£55,737
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£39,179

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

4.26.2 The property at Highfield is a leased building occupied by staff from Health and Social Care (Learning Disability Team). The accommodation has a desk capacity of 28 but given the service is already in a period of redesign, only 10 desks would be required if they were to relocate. The property is rented from the Elgin Community Surgery and the budget for 2020/21 is detailed below:

Privately Leased Property		
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£11,315

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

4.27.1 Health and Social Care rent 2 buildings from Springfield Properties Ltd. These building have the capacity to accommodate 12 staff (9a) and 49 staff (9c). The Service is currently in a period of re-design so if they were to relocate to alternative accommodation the service would be looking for a maximum of 40 desk spaces.

4.27.2 The current lease with Springfield Properties Ltd requires a 1-year notification period to terminate.

Privately Leased Property

Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£168.067
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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

4.28.2 30-32 High Street has recently been vacated, following the termination of an external lease. Two short term lease requirements have been identified as part of the council's response to the pandemic.

4.28.3 Criminal Justice have secured government funding for 6 months to lease the upper floor of the property to provide additional space for service provision because of the COVID 19 social distancing requirements. The rental income for the upper floor is £4,122 for six months and £687 per month thereafter.

4.28.4 The Environment Health and Trading Standards Manager has secured government funding to lease the ground floor as an asymptomatic COVID-19 testing site for a period of up to a year. The rental income for the ground floor annually is £11,200.

4.28.5 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition	B
Property Suitability	B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all building elements is not available.	

Operating budget estimate =	£11,950
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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

4.29.2 19-23 High Street is currently leased until 31 October 2022 by a third sector organisation.

4.29.3 It is recommended that the property remains leased to a third sector organisation which supports Health and Social Care Moray services and negotiations on extension of the lease are undertaken in 2022.

4.29.4 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition	B
Property Suitability	B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all building elements is not available.	

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)

OFFICES (out of Elgin)	CORE FUNCTION	OFFICE STATUS
Auchernack, Forres	Customer Services (mixed services)	Owned by Council
Buckie Area Office	Customer Services (mixed services)	Owned by Council
Keith Community Hub	Customer Services (mixed services)	Owned by Council

Auchernack, Forres

- 5.1 The Review of Auchernack was completed in 2019. On 16 December 2019, the office was closed and all staff relocated to Forres House, High Street Elgin. The property has now been deemed a surplus property and has been marketed for sale. A desktop valuation of the property estimates its value at £110k.

Buckie Area Office 13 Cluny Square

- 5.2 The Cluny Square office is located on 3 floors. The building includes:

- Access Point;
- 3 Interview Rooms;
- 10 offices across 3 floors; and
- Welfare facilities.

- 5.3 The building is occupied by staff from Customer Services (1.5); Housing Services (7); Children and Families East Team (20) and Criminal Justice (1). The property has been rated poor in terms of suitability.

Buckie Area office - Property Elements

- 5.4 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		C
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard across all elements		£135,950
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£25,545

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.

Keith Community Hub

- 5.5.2 The Hub is all on the Ground floor and includes:

- Access Point;
- 2 Interview Rooms;
- A Meeting Room;
- 5 offices; and
- Welfare facilities.

5.5.3 The building is occupied by staff from Housing Services (4); Community Care (9); Children and Families East Team (13) and Customer Services (2.5). The property is in reasonable condition and is suitable for its intended purpose.

5.5.4 The last survey of offices buildings was completed in 2015/16. The information relating to the property elements set out below are taken from this survey.

Property Condition		B
Property Suitability		B
Maintenance Costs to achieve B/B standard		£85,578
Operating budget for 2020/21	=	£10,167

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

6.1 As part of the Office Review consideration has been given to the co-location of inter-dependent services. Services that often work together include:

- Housing Services – Housing Management/Homelessness;
- Revenues/Benefits;
- Children and Families;
- Social Work Access Teams (Adult/children/young people);
- Social Work (Learning Disability Team); and
- Registrars.

6.2 These services also include staff who provide support to vulnerable households. These include:

- Housing Support Workers;
- Family Support Workers; and
- Project Workers.

6.3 These services also include a number of reception and Administration staff. Recent experience from the relocation of the Forres Access Point to Forres House and from the COVID-19 closure of access points has identified opportunities to review reception services, which are underway as part of the Customer Service project. However, co-location may bring further opportunities for inter-service reception arrangements and this will be taken into account through the customer service project and office space revised as appropriate.

- 6.4 Co-location may also help to facilitate the release of savings through multi-disciplinary and cross service working.
- 6.5 It is not possible to predict potential savings from the co-location of services at this stage but if services were to come together, there may be options worthy of investigation to explore how these co-located services could operate in a more integrated manner and to assess possible inter-dependencies to establish if there is any operational overlap and duplication of effort. This would form part of the stage 2 review.

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

7.1 The Office Review offers an opportunity to re-design services. ICT infrastructure, hardware and software will continue to be a critical enabler to reduce reliance on fixed buildings.

7.2 A further enabler is the methodology for office workspace allocation and definition of workstyles. The methodology adopted as part of the Council's Designing Better Services (DBS) should be revisited and linked to a review of the Flexible Work Policy. There should be a shift within services to identifying more staff within a flexible workstyle and reducing where appropriate those staff that are currently categorised as "fixed". COVID-19 has demonstrated that some services and staff have been able to adapt to a more flexible work pattern and as part of service redesign, this is an opportune time to progress this approach.

7.3 The shift to digital services should be pursued (where appropriate) but there will remain some face-to-face services where this will prove challenging (i.e. Housing/Homelessness). Each Department should consider setting up working groups in order to investigate options for a digital shift in service provision. There should be further savings options identified if this channel shift is pursued and this is part of the council's Improvement and Modernisation Programme.

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.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are 7 offices identified in this stage 1 review where additional capacity within the HQ Campus and further service based reviews could result in these offices being vacated, securing a potential capital and revenue saving. This will bring a financial benefit to the Council and/or Health and Social Care. Details of the indicative operational savings/lease and sales value are provided below:

Council

Proposed Office Closures	Indicative Operational Savings	Indicative Capital Receipt	Additional Comments
Beechbrae	£31,843	Capital Receipt £300,000	Education ASN review requires to be complete. Medium term option
240 High Street	£9,800	Capital Receipt £227,000	Agreement required to relocate the Assessors. Medium term option
9 North Guildry Street, Elgin	£18,065	Capital Receipt £80,000	This offers highest financial return
17 High Street, Elgin	£5,145	Property unlikely to sell	Potential lease value £10,000
30-32 High Street, Elgin	£11,900	To be valued	To be leased for COVID recovery for 1 year
Indicative Totals	£76,753	£607,000	£10,000

The main loss of income to Council income would come from the Marriage Room. Total income generated over last 2 years is £2,368. This is negligible in terms of progressing the sale of 240 High Street, Elgin. The relocation of the Assessors from 240 High Street has not been assessed and could significantly change the saving to the Council.

The implications for the ICT infrastructure costs at 9 North Guildry Street have not been assessed and could preclude/reduce the savings to the Council.

Beechbrae requires to be retained meantime and some interim improvements made to it while the ASN review is being undertaken.

Health and Social Care

Proposed Office Closures	Indicative Operational Savings	Indicative Capital Receipt/ lease value	Additional Comments
9a and 9c Southfield	£169,000	-	Health and Social Care saving
Highfield House, Elgin	£20,229	-	Health and Social Care saving
Actual Total	£189,229	-	-

8.2 The rent payments for properties jointly occupied by the Council and NHS staff is viewed as part of the Moray Integrated Joint Board budget. As the Council contribute to this pooled budget any saving to this budget is reflected in a proportionate saving to the Council.

9. COVID-19

9.1 COVID-19 has impacted on all council services and has forced staff to work from home and adopt a more flexible workstyle. The need to adopt a 2m safe distance space standard between people has seriously impaired office capacity and therefore any move to implement any of the proposed changes will be delayed until social distancing is removed.

9.2 The following shows how office capacities have reduced to the following safe levels with 2m social distancing

Building	Normal Capacity	Restricted Capacity (COVID)
HQ Annexe	223	68
HQ main building	537	228
Rose Cottage	35	6
Beechbrae	71	40
Child Protection Unit	11	7
9 North Guildry Street	25	11
11 North Guildry Street	32	6
17 High Street	5	2
240 High Street	5	5
Moray Resource Centre	20	11
Cameron Parkbrae	5	0
9a Southfield	12	6
9c Southfield	49	25
Highfield	28	9
Totals	1,058	424

10. Conclusion

- 10.1 To establish the long-term office needs the Council is reviewing the working styles and desk requirements of its staff. The current working styles of the staff were last set by the DBS programme with staff assigned fixed, flexible or mobile designations. The working style assessments of all staff were not completed as part of the DBS programme and the policy was not fully implemented across the office estate. In particular, Education and Social Work did not complete DBS reviews.
- 10.2 A new flexible working policy is currently being developed, which could revise the work styles and desk requirements. A completion date for this new policy has not been confirmed as the policy and this review require to be considered in conjunction with one another.
- 10.3 Meantime, as part of stage 1 the Council could fully implement the pre-existing DBS programme work styles, which represent a high water mark in terms of spatial allocations and create additional capacity within the HQ Campus. Subject to the caveats above, this would allow 9 North Guildry Street to close and Health and Social Care Staff from 9a & 9c Southfield and Highfield house to relocate to the HQ campus.
- 10.4 Beechbrae offices are a medium term opportunity, which will only be known once the ASN review is complete and alternative accommodation options have been considered.
- 10.5 The 240 High Street office is also a medium term opportunity, which will only be known once the Assessors have confirmed their long-term office strategy in Moray.
- 10.6 It is proposed that the Council should wait for the new flexible working policy to be completed and fully implement this as a single programme of work. The lease notice period for the Southfield offices is one year and with the continued response to COVID restrictions likely to be in place for the remainder of this year these two factors will set the timescale for implementation. As part of the review of this policy, the Council should consider whether it would reconfigure it office space to meet the new flexible working requirements that could also include emerging initiatives such community office hubs in rural areas.