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SCRUTINY COMMISSION

3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL ON THE OFFICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to summarise the Panel's review of current office accommodation and set out its key findings which will form the basis of the Corporate Office Accommodation Strategy currently being developed.

Remit of the Panel

2. The terms of reference were agreed by the Chairman and Spokesmen of the Scrutiny Commission. In agreeing these, it was recognised that this review was different to previous reviews undertaken by Scrutiny in that the aim was to bring a member perspective to the development of a strategic direction to the development of a Corporate Office Accommodation Strategy. As such, the Panel has not considered in detail any proposals for relocation of offices or staff, that being a matter for the Implementation Plan to be developed following agreement of the strategic vision.

Review Report

3. The report of the review panel is attached. The report is divided into 5 sections which set out:-
 - Summary of Key Findings, the future shape of office accommodation provision and Member comments on moving this forward.
 - Remit of the panel and conduct of the review
 - Key drivers for change
 - Historic and current position in relation to office accommodation
 - Outcome of consultation including member views.

Resource Implications

4. It anticipated that there will be additional upfront investments needed, which will generate, over a period of time, efficiency savings once the Strategy is in place. Some of the additional resources required have already been provided as part of the development of the former ESPO building. Further resources will be required and a business case would need to be put forward as part of the implementation plan

Recommendations

5. The Commission is asked to:-
 - a) consider the findings of the Panel and, if agreed, recommend that these should inform the development of the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy;
 - b) request a further report in twelve months' time on progress on developing and implementing the Strategy.

Equal Opportunities Implications

6. The Office Accommodation Strategy will need to take account of all relevant statutory requirements to ensure that premises are accessible both for employees and for members of the public. The potential for extended opening hours in some customer facing offices would make the services more accessible, particularly to people who work fulltime.

Environmental Impact

7. Environmental sustainability will be a key driver of the final Office Accommodation Strategy.

Circulation under the Sensitive Issues Procedure

None.

Background Papers

Attached report of the Review Panel

**MRS J A DICKINSON
CHAIRMAN OF THE PANEL**