SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation – Progress Report on Area Presence

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report has been prepared to update members on the findings and recommendations following the David Lock Associates report December 2017 on SSDC Review of Operational Office Accommodation. At that meeting it was agreed to task the Members' Leadership and Development Project group (MLDPG) to oversee the development of operational requirements for future Area presence to enable detailed options to be worked up for each Area in Spring 2018.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan with an anticipated Committee date of 1st March 2018.

Public Interest

3. Following on from the approval of the Commercial Strategy in August 2017, District Executive agreed that a more detailed operational property review and report would be undertaken to assess the current needs of the Council's offices against its future requirements, post Transformation, across the District. In December 2017 this work was reported back to the District Executive.   One strand was that the recommendations on Area offices be referred to the Members' Leadership and Development Project Group to ensure that accommodation in each Area, beyond the SSDC Headquarter's requirements, matches the changes in customer demand as well as the emerging operational needs of the new Locality arrangements and Area+ system post Transformation.

4. This has been discussed by the Members' Leadership & Development Project Group (MLDPG) (Locality Working) and some broad principles are set out below as a progress report, pending more detailed work to develop a preferred option for each Area, taking into account local circumstances.

Recommendations

5. That the District Executive :

   1) Endorse the principles for Area presence as set out in the report below. This includes disposal of and/or redevelopment of its current Area Offices over the next 2 years in accordance with relevant governance and policies;

   2) Note that Officers will keep Members up to date on progress as specific proposals emerge for each Area.

Background

6. Following on from the approval of the Commercial Strategy and associated documents in August 2017, District Executive agreed that a review and report of the Council's operational office property would be undertaken to assess the Council's future requirements post Transformation, including reviewing the Area offices. Members will be aware that overall there is a substantial amount of vacant space in these offices and they are not suitable for our operational needs as an agile style of working is introduced alongside the wider Transformation Programme.

7. In December 2017 the above review, undertaken by David Lock Associates, was presented and the Executive resolved to task the Members' Leadership & Development Project Group (MLDPG) (Locality Working) to consider the report's recommendations made in regard to Area Offices, with input from Area Development Officers led by the Locality Manager and report back to the District Executive with findings and recommendations in respect of office/building requirements to meet the new model of delivery.

## Principles for developing a revised Area Presence

8. This report is a progress report following consideration of the principles for Area presence by the MLDPG:

   - The Council should aim to dispose of and/or redevelop its current Area Offices over the next 2 years
   - The Council should aim to facilitate and be part of a network of "Community Hubs" to provide:
     - a local resource for communities
     - a local presence and place to meet customers
     - touchdown space for Council Officers and officers from other organisations
   - Community Hubs will vary from Area to Area, but could include some or all of:
     - Community run or SCC Library with associated IT facilities and books
     - Self-service facility for SSDC and other public services (either as part of IT above or separately)
     - A booth to enable Skype or have face to face meetings with a SSDC Officer (Customer Focused Officer, Case Officer, Specialist Officer or Locality Officer) and drop in sessions
     - Parish/Town Council Office
     - Community association, village hall or school
     - Touchdown/working space for a range of organisations including:
       - ➢ SSDC
       - ➢ Avon & Somerset Police
       - ➢ SCC
       - ➢ Housing Associations
       - ➢ Community Groups

9. Ideally, but not exclusively, the facility will be owned and run by a Parish/Town Council or Community Group, with SSDC and others providing revenue funding support by paying rent for the space they occupy.

10. An opportunity exists with the consultation on the future of library provision in Somerset, to advance talks and think rapidly in some Areas, as a means of preserving library provision in a financially sustainable way, whilst also meeting the changing needs of a number of organisations and their customers. There may be potential to secure One Public Estate (OPE) funding to advance this work.

11. This approach was endorsed by the MLDPG at their meeting on 8th February 2018. The main additional points made at the group, have been incorporated into the list above, but members also stressed the importance of working closely with the town councils and the synergies of having a joined up approach with them.

12. The attached Appendix sets out the operational needs and the specifications that will assist with the development of options in each Area. In Area South, the retention of SSDC HQ space, including a town centre presence, means that the solution will differ from the other Areas, although the specification remains similar. The next step is for the Area Teams, supported by the Commercial Property Team, to advance the proposals, working closely with the Area Chairperson, prioritising those communities where libraries are currently under threat, with this responsibility being inherited by "Area+" teams once constituted.

Financial Implications

13. None at this stage. There is considerable work to be undertaken by Area Development Teams and the Commercial Property Team, which will affect work priorities across the next few months. Costs will be addressed as and when detailed proposals are developed for each Area.

Risk Matrix

Risk Profile before officer recommendations   **Risk Profile after officer recommendations**
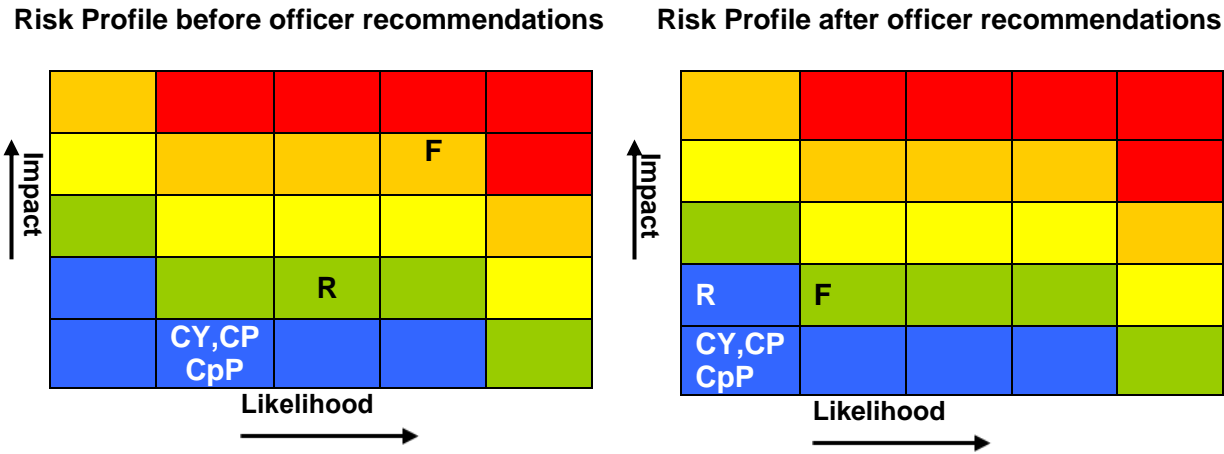
Key

Categories			Colours *(for further detail please refer to Risk management strategy)*		
R	=	Reputation	Red	=	High impact and high probability
CpP	=	Corporate Plan Priorities	Orange	=	Major impact and major probability
CP	=	Community Priorities	Yellow	=	Moderate impact and moderate probability
CY	=	Capacity	Green	=	Minor impact and minor probability
F	=	Financial	Blue	=	Insignificant impact and insignificant probability

Council Plan Implications

14. A. Our Strategy:
    To create a modern, responsive, proactive Council serving South Somerset through a Transformation Programme, developing the culture and working practices needed to support a flexible, customer focused Council with a modern, commercial approach

B. Our Priority Projects:
    To implement the Transformation Programme

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

15. Reducing, or using more efficiently, the Council's operational property portfolio will support a reduction in Council carbon emissions.

Equality and Diversity Implications

16. Access for all members of the community, including protected groups, is a key consideration and any proposals will be subject to an equality impact assessment in due course.

Privacy Impact Assessment

17. Not applicable.

Background Papers

18. David Lock Associates Report – November 2017

Appendix - Design of Area Presence

Assumptions from property review	- Members & Officers will be fully agile before implementation (clarify timescales for changes) - Default position is to co-locate in other organisations' premises - OPE (One Public Estate), multi-agency approach being explored in Yeovil & Chard - Different circumstances and solutions in each Area - Community hubs concept mean multiple locations required in each Area - Recommendations via Members' Leadership & Development Project Group	
		Specification
Operational requirements	- Locality working (Tim Cook)	- Lock up space for kit - Touchdown space – individual & team – up to 3 desks? - Quality wifi to operate new technology - Small meeting space – bookable - Facilities – toilet, access to refreshments/kitchenette, etc.
	- Area Committee (Angela Cox/Tim Cook)	- Hall available for regular 4hr block monthly - Quality wifi - Min space for 40 seated – Area, Committee & public - Screen, projector & amplification provided by venue including hearing loop that works - Set up, etc. carried out by venue & included in price - Refreshments provided by venue & included in price - Touchdown space available – Planning Officers, etc. - Good parking & access - Ideally we should be working with one main venue in each Area
	- Customer access (Sharon Jones/Tim Cook)	- Multi-agency – public sector, bookable appointments/drop in (ie: not a permanent presence for people to call in) - Town Council - County Council - Police - Accessible – parking and wifi essential
	- Area project & service case delivery (Martin Woods)	May need more "touch down" desk space especially in Area West – up to 6 desks per area? Requirements as for Locality touchdown
Premises options – being developed by the ADTs and Democratic Case Officers	- Look at wide range to inc: Fire Stations, libraries, Town Council offices & community halls/community centres, etc. - Most work required in East & North. In South and West linked to regeneration plans and location of HQ - Revisit work already done: AW – move to Guildhall; AN – Bridge Barns/library alternatives; AE – Committee requirements finding a venue and co-location with Police; AS determine HQ first, possible Committee venue is Westlands	