

Decision Report – Cabinet decision

– 19 December 2018

County Hall A Block final business case approval

Cabinet Member(s): Cllr Mandy Chilcott – Cabinet Member for Resources

Division and Local Member(s): Cllr Simon Coles (Taunton East); Cllr Giuseppe

Fraschini (Taunton North); Cllr James Hunt (Upper Tone); Cllr John Hunt (Bishops Hull and Taunton West); Cllr Hazel Prior-Sankey (Taunton South)

Lead Officer: Paula Hewitt, Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure & Director of Commissioning

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	Seen by:	Name	Date
	County Solicitor	Tom Woodhams	5/12/18
	Monitoring Officer	Scott Wooldridge	5/12/18
	Corporate Finance	Peter Lewis	6/12/18
	Human Resources	Chris Squire	10/12/18
	Property	Paula Hewitt / Claire Lovett	7/12/18
	Procurement / ICT	Simon Clifford	6/12/18
	Senior Manager	Paula Hewitt	7/12/18
	Commissioning Development Team	Vikki Hearn	6/12/18
	Local Member(s)	Cllr Simon Coles (Taunton East); Cllr Guiseppe Fraschini (Taunton North); Cllr James Hunt (Upper Tone); Cllr John Hunt (Bishops Hull and Taunton West); Cllr Hazel Prior Sankey (Taunton South)	10/12/18
	Cabinet Member	Cllr Mandy Chilcott	6/12/18
	Opposition Spokesperson	Cllr Liz Leyshon	6/12/18
	Relevant Scrutiny Chairman	Cllr Anna Groskop	10/12/18
Forward Plan Reference:	FP/18/10/05		
Summary:	This is the final part of an ambitious scheme to save the Authority upwards of £700,000 per year by closing down		

	<p>buildings across Taunton and moving staff into a single, modern and fit for purpose working environment.</p> <p>Various works phases are already complete at County Hall leading up to and following Full Council's approval of A Block Priority 1 improvements capital funding in February 2018. See Project Background at Appendix A for further information and decision papers listed as Appendices to this paper. See also list of completed phases in Reasons for Recommendations below.</p> <p>Delivering a refurbished A Block at County Hall will enable the Council to achieve annual savings of upwards of £700,000 on completion of the project based on the current project scope.</p> <p>A breakdown of the expected annual savings as a result of vacating 8 satellite buildings in Taunton and other associated financial benefits are listed in the Options section below and the value of the savings are within the final business case at confidential Appendix B.</p> <p>The Final Business Case and financial model is prudent in its assumptions and does not include any figures in relation to the future of C Block, County Hall, pending consideration of its future use, or potential partner income. The current scope of savings in this business case are not the end of savings that can be achieved. There are various additional financial benefits and opportunities that can be explored during 2020 and beyond. This would see further annual revenue savings and efficiencies, from considering moves of services within other buildings in Taunton, and beyond the boundary of Taunton, into County Hall.</p> <p>A decision to proceed with bringing A Block up to re-useable, future proof accommodation standards should deliver additional benefits in the coming years which provide opportunities to improve the payback period currently projected.</p>
<p>Recommendations</p>	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the Final Business Case for A Block refurbishment (Confidential Appendix) 2. Recommends to Council that the cost of £2.5million to complete the A Block refurbishment project is committed and approved as part of the 2019/20 capital programme at their meeting in February 2019 3. Delegates authority, subject to:

	<p>a) allocation of the cost of the project by the Council within the 19/20 Capital programme by the County Council (see recommendation 2 above); and</p> <p>b) receipt of Listed Building Consent (Planning Portal reference 4/38/18/0385/OB), expected January 2019;c) receipt of a final tendered contract cost which falls within the available budget;</p> <p>d) the requirement that all items of recommended contingency spend under the contract are reviewed and agreed by the Head of Corporate Property or an officer of higher seniority before approval;</p> <p>to the Lead Director for Economic and Community Infrastructure and Director for Commissioning, in consultation with the Head of Corporate Property, to enter the contract to deliver refurbishment of A Block, County Hall</p> <p>4. Agrees the case for applying the exempt information provision as set out in the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and therefore to treat the attached confidential report (see Appendix B) and its appendices in confidence, as they contain information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council, and the case for the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing that information.</p> <p>5. Subject to the approval of recommendation 4 above, agrees to exclude the press and public from the meeting for the consideration of the attached confidential report and its appendices where there is any discussion at the meeting regarding exempt or confidential information.</p>
<p>Reasons for Recommendations:</p>	<p>Somerset County Council (SCC) has already delivered a number of phases required to achieve the aims of the A Block refurbishment project. The work to date has included</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emptying A Block, • Relocating FM and Records teams into B Ground South to enable AG reception to be moved, • Reconfiguring BG North to accommodate reception temporarily during A Block works; • Replacing boiler infrastructure and boiler components which future proofs ongoing use of A Block and Shire Hall (as well as C Block temporarily), • Improved showers, changing, drying facilities for staff and members;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of Taunton library meeting room for public committee meetings for rest of 2018 and all of 2019. <p>Implementation of the recommendations in this report will enable SCC to vacate and dispose of 8 buildings in and around Taunton saving on significant annual running costs upwards of £700,000 leading up to and during 2020 as part of this initial project's scope. (see table included in Options section below). A Block main refurbishment works are to take place from March 2019 to January 2020.</p> <p>The accompanying confidential appendix contains commercially sensitive information relating to the contract and the Council's financial and business affairs. Officers recommend that this is treated as exempt information. "Exempt information" is defined by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, by Schedule 12A to that Act.</p>
<p>Links to County Vision, Business Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy:</p>	<p>This Decision has links to the County Plan priorities to 'reduce the number of buildings we operate to free up funding for frontline services' and 'Living within our means', ensuring that properties SCC occupy are fit for purpose by undertaking a programme of urgent planned maintenance works.</p> <p>This Decision has links to the Business Plan by contributing to addressing challenges of (1) ensuring the council lives within its means. This can include cutting budgets. (2) Continuously develop and improve the way we work, find better ways of doing things and embrace new technology. Supports organisational development priorities for the Council.</p> <p><u>A sustainable Council</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing property portfolio. SCC can reduce its portfolio across Taunton by implementing this proposal to enable the opportunity to optimise use of its main HQ County Hall buildings. <p>Through the Council's Asset Management Plan make best use of County Council assets to deliver accessible, responsive and sustainable services. Implement and deliver our commercial approach to asset management, specifically to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploit commercial investment and revenue generating opportunities. • Maximise income from selling assets, including for development purposes. <p>This decision will also support the SCC Social Value Policy as the Council will need to ensure it is getting value for money from the contractor, who have been procured from a framework contract. to maximise the impact of public</p>

	<p>spend. The contractor has already confirmed they are committed to delivering social value as part of the full A Block project and these benefits are being delivered on projects elsewhere in the county.</p> <p>The completion of this project also supports elements of the SCC People Strategy such as: Refresh and revitalise colleagues' ability to spend more time working from home or other locations, to help with the balance between work and personal life; Foster a working environment that promotes the wellbeing of staff.</p> <p>The accompanying confidential report contains commercially sensitive information relating to the contract and the Council's financial and business affairs. Officers recommend that this is treated as exempt information. "Exempt information" is defined by Section 100 of the Local Government Act 1972, by Schedule 12A to that Act.</p>
<p>Consultations and co-production undertaken:</p>	<p>Regular briefings have been held with the Leader, Deputy Leader acting as Member Champion for the project, Strategic Risk Management Group (January, June, September, November 2018), Strategic Commissioning Group, Directors within Senior Leadership Team. Scrutiny Policy and Place – 30/1/18, 11 December 18 Cabinet – 12/2/18 Council – 21/2/18 and a members briefing on 16/5/18, Member Frequently Asked Questions sheet May 2018 and updated November 2018 Customers and visitors to County Hall have been notified that Reception has moved from A Block to B Block temporarily.</p> <p>The following stakeholder groups have been consulted in relation to the design and layouts of the areas affected by these enabling works. Facilities Management, Customers and Communities, Health and Safety, Property, IT, Procurement, Workforce Equalities and Equalities officers, Civil Contingencies, Insurance, Conservation, Heritage (throughout the planning process), Planning, SCC 'satellite office' managers in Taunton.</p> <p>No conflicts of interest have been declared from Cabinet or Council Members in relation to these proposals.</p>
<p>Financial Implications:</p>	<p>The A Block refurbishment project approach is delivered on a capital funding invest-to-save basis. Please refer to confidential appendix B for the final business case and financial model which provides detail on savings associated with satellite offices being vacated.</p> <p>Capital summary:</p>

Funding already in place	£7.75m	Approved by Full Council Feb 18 (essential works – heating, electrics, asbestos, lift) + One Public Estate (OPE) capital
Capital now required to deliver full project to maximise benefits	£2.5m	To be determined as part of capital programme Feb 19
TOTAL	£10,250,000	

The proposed contract will cover both the remaining Priority 1 essential works together with the refurbishment works and therefore will significantly exceed the £2.5million.

Revenue savings:

£723,000 expected annual property savings as per table at section 2.2 below

£100,000 one off rate relief during period A Block is empty

£25,000 one off rate relief once C Block is empty

The project is self financing over a period of 8.3 years based on the current scope. From the point at which savings come online, the project has a payback period of 5.3 years. Any further savings achieved beyond 2020 will decrease this payback period.

Capital funding was approved by the County Council and committed in February 2018 for A Block Priority 1 improvement works valuing £6.4m; the balance of capital funding for completing the refurbishment element of the works has been sought in the County Council's budget for 19/20 funding round. Without the remaining balance being approved, SCC cannot deliver the complete project, maximise the County Hall asset base and achieve the associated savings identified in the final business case.

The business case financial model looks at:

1. Payback period for the refurbishment works; 2. How quickly revenue savings start to be generated

SCC capital programme money previously allocated to the One Public Estate (OPE) programme is contributing to the capital costs for this project as well as the retained client project contingency. The capital funding required for the project underwrites £75k income which is an expected contribution to the heating costs.

Confirmed financial benefits arise from delivering a completed A Block by saving significant annual lease costs from 8 satellite offices occupied by SCC across Taunton, as well as storage savings, one off rate relief savings and savings associated with the efficiency of the new A Block boiler. In addition, the delivery of a completed A Block enables the creation of potential additional savings and potential income opportunities in relation to

- Creating spare back office space to be offered to public sector partners, generating potential income

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential for creating larger meeting/training space to bring in some meetings presently booked and paid for externally. • Potential to bring onto campus documents presently archived offsite and this save rental/service costs. • Potential to offer more 'agile' working spaces for staff who 'touch down' in County Hall but do not have an allocated desk/block/zone • Potential to offer County Hall accommodation to SCC teams currently based outside Taunton
<p>Legal Implications:</p>	<p>Subject to final tender price, it is proposed to let this contract through the SCAPE framework, approved by the Strategic Opportunities Board on 10/1/18 and reviewed and approved by the Strategic Commissioning Group in September 2018. This procurement route complies with the requirements of SCC's Contract Standing Orders.</p> <p>There will be a need for ICT networking and furniture tendering exercises during 2019 but these items will go through the Strategic Commissioning Board or equivalent and appropriate Non Key or Key Decisions will be required before equipment order/s are placed.</p>
<p>HR Implications:</p>	<p>No direct HR implications associated with taking decision to enter full refurbishment contract. HR implications relate to campus team moves during and post refurbishment to occupy office space at Taunton library, re-occupy A Block and vacate C Block. Satellite office teams identified as in scope have and are continuing to be engaged during 2018; C Block teams will be engaged during 2019. Reasonable adjustments will be made for those with identified mobility and accessibility needs when managing team moves. Anticipated accessibility needs are also being taken into account within the A Block design and layout. There may be some staff who will be affected by a change of team base as a result of this project; where this has been identified as an issue for staff, managers are aware and are taking advice from their relevant HR adviser.</p>
<p>Risk Implications:</p>	<p>The main risk implications of taking this decision are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased reputational risk to SCC if project delivery does not meet critical path; Mitigation for this is thorough and advance planning and collaboration with all project workstreams to ensure projected benefits in the business case are optimised and achieved; 2. Insufficient resources available to support c750 staff change and moves resulting in sub optimal delivery; Mitigation for this is to regularly review available resources, plan and understand key pinch points, engage with teams early so they understand implications of changes well in advance of team moves; allowance has been made within

	the financial model for buying in additional workstream support at key times 3. Uncertainty about future staff numbers could require further redesign at a future date; Mitigation for this is to design and deliver as flexible a building as possible to support known customer, public and back office functions					
	Likelihood	4	Impact	4	Risk Score	16
Other Implications (including due regard implications):	During 2019 an appropriate solution for accessible parking outside the front of A Block for visitors will be discussed and agreed. This will be subject to a separate planning application during 2019. The SCC Equalities Officer will be represented during these discussions.					
Scrutiny comments / recommendation (if any):	Not applicable.					

1. Background

1.1. Please see Appendix A – Project Background.

2. Options considered and reasons for rejecting them

- 2.1. Do Nothing – A block continues to be unuseable as it is largely empty and has been handed over to the contractor for intrusive asbestos surveys; public committee meetings would need to continue to be off site for the foreseeable future; staff experience completely different office accommodation standards on site; leased buildings in and around Taunton continue to require significant annual revenue spend. Although this option may have benefits in terms of reduced capital spend it does not deliver the revenue savings for future years. If this decision is not taken, SCC are left with a historic civic building in the heart of Taunton which is largely unuseable for staff, Members and the public. Public committee meetings cannot return to County Hall without this refurbishment contract going ahead. Without this decision, SCC cannot realise estate optimisation and rationalisation objectives across and potentially beyond Taunton. This would mean SCC cannot achieve significant annual lease savings associated with local offices earmarked to move to the County Hall campus. At a time when financial imperatives are a top priority for SCC, the investment in A Block will achieve identified annual savings. The SCC Strategic Risk Management Group have been updated regularly on the top risks associated with this project throughout 2018. This report and decision is sought on the basis that the balance of funding required needs approval by Full Council in February 2019.
- 2.2. Do Something – proceed with full A Block refurb contract; Benefits listed as follows:
- Significant annual revenue savings to SCC and the wider public purse
 - Creates opportunity for commercial lettings and sharing running costs with partners
 - Supports opportunity for better health & social care integration

- Fewer, better condition buildings to manage
- Conserves historic A Block for continued civic use
- Increased flexible accommodation and staff, enhancing facilities to support the Health and Wellbeing agenda
- Releasing SCC assets for disposal

SCC Council Members have been engaged regarding member accommodation; future shared Member facilities are proposed which rationalises and reduces current use. Evidence from an occupancy study carried out in the Winter of 2017/18 showed minimal use of individual political group rooms. Member briefing sessions took place in December 2017 and May 2018. Shared Member facilities are expected to generate an annual saving of £35k over the original 2018 space allocation.

Please see confirmed benefits summary below of SCC occupied Taunton area based offices in 2018 compared to those to be vacated by the end of the A Block project.

Property	Revenue Saving
C Block closure (running costs)	164,000
Wellington House	123,000
1 The Crescent	117,000
Belvedere Road, YOT base	20,000
Express Park (MASH) – decision awaited	35,500
Deane House contact centre	47,000
Holway Centre	64,000
Taunton Academy	115,000
'Temporary Well' shower unit	7,500
Storage savings	30,000
New boiler energy efficiencies	Factor dependent
Total Expected Annual Revenue Benefit	£723,000
<u>One off</u> rate relief from empty A Block for 2019	£100,000
<u>One off</u> rate relief from empty C Block	£25,000

Please refer to confidential Appendix B for the final business case and financial model which provides further detail on savings associated with above listed buildings.

3. Background Papers

3.1. Appendix A – Project Background

Appendix B - Final Business Case for A Block (Confidential)

Published Business Case Appendices

- Officer Key Decision 20 November 17 – Urgent Priority 1 Works Approval

- Officer Non Key Decision approving A Block Outline Business Case (OBC) – 11 January 2018
- SCC Cabinet and Full Council minutes and 2018/2019 capital (Priority 1) approvals appendix – February 2018
- Officer Key Decision 14 June 2018 – County Hall Enabling Works
- Equalities Impact Assessment (appended to this report)
 - Updated Network for Employees with Disabilities (NED) questions and answers 2018
 - Staff Workforce Monitoring Report March 2018

Confidential Business Case Appendices

- Pre-tender cost plan summary December 2018

Appendix A – Project Background

County Hall A Block is in poor condition, requiring urgent spend to replace the boiler and heating system, and refurbish windows, masonry and the lift. In August 2018 Senior SCC Officers and Members confirmed that A Block is central to SCC's long term plans and that they would wish for the refurbishment project to proceed. Money has already been allocated for essential repairs.

This is an invest to save capital funding project. In the current financial climate, SCC is rationalising its property estate and A block is due to be retained. Bringing this building back into optimal use will unlock the ability for SCC to vacate a number of expensive leased buildings around Taunton which, along with other associated savings, will save SCC upwards of £700,000 a year.

SCC has occupied a number of buildings in and around Taunton, in addition to County Hall, for a number of years. A thorough estate optimisation review has been undertaken of SCC occupied buildings in Taunton. The review identified the opportunity to reduce the amount of SCC back office accommodation sites in Taunton from (currently) 10 buildings/locations to 2 main buildings on the County Hall site from 2020.

In February 2018 capital was allocated for priority 1 improvements for A Block. (electrical systems, heating systems, asbestos removal, lift upgrade). Whilst SCC is investing in these critical systems within the building, it has the opportunity to refurbish the building beyond 'making good', to create fit for purpose flexible accommodation. This presents the most cost efficient way to organise these works.

During 2017 and early 2018, a staged decant programme was carried out of teams and equipment from A Block, which restricts County Hall occupied accommodation to B and C Blocks.

In late summer 2018 the Listed Building Consent was submitted to Taunton Deane Borough Council for consideration, following various consultations with parties interested throughout the design stages in retaining/enhancing the heritage Grade II listed features.

The nature of the A Block project means that capital cost will be incurred across 2 financial years (18/19 and 19/20) however the contract for the full refurbishment will need to be entered into during early 2019, committing the authority to the total cost of the project. The outcome of the balance of the capital funding required to complete the refurbishment element will not be known until February 19 and the project cannot be completed without the remaining balance being approved.

The detailed and technical design process is now complete.

Somerset Equality Impact Assessment

Before completing this EIA please ensure you have read the EIA guidance notes – available from your Equality Officer

Organisation prepared for	Somerset County Council		
Version	1.0	Date Completed	10/10/18

Description of what is being impact assessed

Smart Office was implemented in 2012 and was completed in 2016. The programme enabled new ways of working for staff to become more flexible and efficient within their working environment. A Block at County Hall has not until now been designed as a Smart Office environment. The Council has approved capital funds to address Priority 1 works within A Block (lift, electrical, heating, asbestos). The whole scheme design has taken into account flexible and future use of the building, incorporating Smart working principles on each floor and tries to take account of how teams within SCC will be working in 2020, once Windows 10 and Office 365 technology has been rolled out (by end 2018) and embedded into every day working practices, along with the anticipated culture change required to support these newer ways of working (by 2020).

It is therefore necessary to revisit the impacts of this on the organisation (specifically staff, Members and visitors), and within this document specifically in terms of due regard in respect of Equalities considerations:

Smart Office within A Block is expected to deliver the following:

- Office rationalisation/reduction in Taunton
- Provide the opportunity for commercial lettings at County Hall from partner agencies
- Improved customer facilities, although County Hall is primarily a back office hub
- Reduce the space/s that teams are allocated; pushing towards 5:10 desk ratio for teams where this can be achieved, and reduced storage needs
- Increased frequency of mobile and remote working for staff due to new technology and ongoing discussions with managers to support this
- Improved flexibility / future proofing A Block's use
- Providing shared Member facilities rather than individual political group rooms

- Refurbished A Ground committee / public meeting rooms (Luttrell, Wyndham, Hobhouse)

Somerset County Council (SCC) is committed to providing its services from buildings that are accessible to, and inclusive of, all sections of the community that it serves, and the people it employs. Our vision is to generate an environment where staffs, service users and customers, feel supported, and valued.

Within all of this we want to ensure that we adopt equalities objectives, complying with equalities strategies such as our equality commitment. Ensuring that we are creating effective ways of asking for and including the views of equalities groups, and ensuring the cause of discrimination is eliminated.

IMPACT on Communities – (Communication)

The most visible message to customers will be that Somerset County Council will be reducing the amount of accommodation it uses in and around Taunton. When customers visit County Hall they will be met and managed by reception staff and given the right level of support and care they need. The location of reception will change during the works period and signage and wayfinding will be put in place by the FM team to direct the public. The venue of public committee meetings will be changing during the period of A Block works we are working with Democratic Services to ensure the public are made aware of alternative meeting venues.

The project manager is linking closely with Customer and Communities managers who are responsible for delivering customer service in Taunton and elsewhere across the county in shared buildings and receptions.

Where ‘satellite’ offices in and around Taunton that currently have customer access points are being closed (the list of these is limited), the project team will work with those team managers to support their customers (who will be accessing services from County Hall instead) in order to minimise the impacts on service users. We will undertake reviews of how accessible and effective this has been - measuring the progress of improvements and effective monitoring of equalities impacts, indicators, and outcomes.

Satellite offices in and around Taunton affected by these proposals are:

Office	Parking impact	Accessibility impact
1 The Crescent	Operational vehicles (15); not a customer office base	N/A

Wellington House	Staff parking affected; not a customer office base	See notes below
Belvedere Road (YOT)	Staff parking affected; customer base but no customer parking offered	Being considered as part of early exit of lease building by end 2018
Holway Centre (SSE)	Staff parking affected; not a customer office base	See notes below
Taunton Academy (SCIL/ Somerset Music; other SSE services)	Staff parking affected; customer/trainee parking affected	Trainee parking to be provided at Dillington House from summer 2019
MASH (Express Park)	Staff parking affected; not a customer base	See notes below

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service might impact on protected groups? Sources such as the [Office of National Statistics](#), [Somerset Intelligence Partnership](#), [Somerset's Joint Strategic Needs Analysis \(JSNA\)](#), Staff and/ or [area profiles](#),, should be detailed here

The space within A Block is designed to comply with the Equality Act 2010, and incorporate with SCC processes the Public Sector Equality Duty which came into force on April 6th 2011, specifically in relation to disability access, discrimination, reasonable adjustments, protected characteristics, and equality in its total sense. This also includes the signage, hearing loops and how people access services through the venues, providing good access to all facilities and equipment. Consideration is being given from feedback, accessibility questionnaires, from BCM's, teams and departments, Health and Safety Advice etc in relation to the following:

Paint

These discussions will not have been concluded at the point this Impact Assessment is signed off but we will be addressing this in 2019. During these discussions impacts on contrast, glare, frames, door numbers etc will be considered. It is anticipated that colours for the walls will be selected to create visual stimulation and to provide a sense of cultural change. We will look to select colours that are of a relevant shade variance to ensure differentiation in colour between walls and tambour units etc. A variety of colour where we can will be chosen to provide contrasting environments for staff to work in. We will give due regard to equalities considerations in all of this and any Heritage constraints will be taken into account.

Braille Buttons

Recommendation to ensure all lifts and possible touch points will have braille buttons fitted.

Kitchens

Position and height of kitchen worktops, taps and dispensers are being designed at a level to ensure they are accessible for staff in a wheelchair.

Chairs

During the implementation of Smart Office during 2012-2016, a selection process for chairs was undertaken in consultation with Health and Safety and a selection of staff across services and chairs selected were recommended to meet relevant guidelines. Two types of operator chair were selected and will be repeated within A Block delivery. Specialist equipment and chairs available if required.

Disabled Toilets

Each floor within A Block will have a new accessible disabled toilet with touch pad access and mix of right and left transfers for wheelchair users. This is required to meet latest Building Regulations. We are not providing modesty/privacy panels within the accessible bathrooms as the locations of these bathrooms are opposite retained walls so no one sitting opposite in the office layout will be able to impinge on users privacy.

Guide dog area

There is an appropriate outdoor space for guide dogs with a foul bin provided at County Hall. It is recognised staff using this facility who will be working in A Block will have a slightly further distance to travel to use this. This will be addressed at the appropriate time.

Desks

During the original Smart Office programme delivery 2012-2016, we provided a number of “rise and fall” desks on each wing to accommodate those with special requirements i.e.:- wheelchair users, tall staff, staff with particular health needs that had been identified through Access to Work requirements.

Through lessons learned following implementation of Smart working in 2012, we have recognised the logistical and practical difficulties associated with retrofitting additional rise and fall desks within Smart layouts when a new requirement for a rise and fall is identified due to the fixed desk components and taking these apart to insert a rise and fall desk. To illustrate, some staff did not identify a need for a rise and fall desk prior to moving into a Smart working environment but later found that this was a requirement. Following discussion with the Equalities Lead and Equalities Employment Officer we propose to provide 10% additional rise and fall desks per floor in A block to address this lesson learned from the previous Smart Office delivery. The location of rise and fall desks will be positioned on the corridor ‘aisle’ end of desk banks. Banks of desks will be configured either in blocks of 6 or blocks of 4 with 2 back to back rise and falls on the aisle end of the bank for ease of access for staff from the central ‘corridor’ and also due to proximity of wiring to desks. Following feedback from Smart Office v1.0 the Workforce Equalities Officer has recommended that we deliver desks ‘any other colour than white’ to reduce glare for office users.

Hearing Loops

FM retain a spare portable hearing loop for general use as required - communicated to staff via HR and the intranet site. Visitors are asked by SCC whether they have any accessibility requirements by staff organising the meetings, and all SCC invitations for appointments have a statement regarding accessibility requirements for customers to contact SCC regarding any particular requirements.

Automated Doors

Ensure doors, where necessary, are fitted with an automated activation touch sensitive pads to enable ease of opening.

Lift

The A Block lift is being refurbished. The internal size of the car will be 1500x1300mm. The lift car for A Block is a little narrower but deeper than the B Block lifts but can accommodate a wheelchair user. The lift will have dual controls installed to avoid wheelchair users having to reverse into the lift. Attendant buddies will need to meet their colleagues outside the floor they are visiting.

The lift will not be a fire escape lift so alternative escape provisions will need to be in place for those occupying the building with accessibility needs. Evacuation chairs, PEEPs and buddies will be identified for staff affected in due course.

The A Block lift will provide access to the basement. There will be a gap/lip between the lift and floor level of the basement. There is no need to make the basement floor level DDA compliant for wheelchair users however the flooring will be levelled outside the

basement entrance to the lift. With regard to wheelchair users having access to the basement, SCC would need to ensure a non-lift reliant escape route which means that we would need the correct escape chair, a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) for the individual, and a suitably trained buddy to travel with a wheelchair user anytime they visited to the basement. Escape is made more difficult as it is a case of lifting the wheelchair user up the stairs rather than just safely descending them. As the basement is just for storage of large items and the boilers, the benefit of access versus the enhanced risk should be considered. The space can be made accessible, but a risk assessment may well determine that it is not recommended.

Meetings structures

Ensured that where appropriate, relevant meetings include representatives from Health and Safety and Equalities.

Equipment

Provided specialist equipment for those that work from home when requested. This includes a choice of carry case for equipment depending upon individual and business requirements.

Flexibility

All staff will be designated as “mobile” workers unless DSE assessment or Access to Work determines otherwise.

The needs of colleagues who need access to specialist equipment either identified by Occupational Health, DSE or Access to Work assessments will be looked at on an individual needs basis and managed by the individual’s line manager supported by the Project team.

Space allocation will always comply with minimum standards laid down in the Workplace (Health, Safety & Welfare) Regulations 1992, this will include the need for reasonable adjustments to accommodate the needs of individuals, as laid down in the Equalities Act 2010, (and subsequent legislation for legal reasons).

Whilst the Smart Office within A Block is being designed, any building changes we undertake as part of the A Block office refurbishment will comply with building regulations. Specifically approved document M which relates to the access to and use of buildings including items such as ramps, door openings forces and DWC provision, and the Equalities act 2010, (and subsequent legislation for legal reasons).

As outlined above we consulted with the Network for Employee’s with a Disability (NED) when Smart Office was implemented 2012-2016. **Appendix A** outlines the concerns the NED group raised at that time and the actions that have/are being taken to resolve them in delivery of A Block.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? If you have not consulted other people, please explain why?

There will be impacts on **customers** who use our Taunton based offices that are co-locating at County Hall, **staff** and **Members** of SCC.

Staff and Members needs/requirements will be addressed when planning the various moves back into the building, and we will incorporate this into plans to provide staff zones and shared Member facilities.

Customers, Members and staff may include people from protected characteristic groups, and may be affected by proposals (please see the table below for mitigation, Section 5).

Adhering to our Public Sector Equality Duty across all “protected characteristics” (2011), as below:

1. Disabilities people
2. Marriage and civil partnership
3. Pregnancy and maternity
4. Age – e.g. Older people, Young people
5. Sexual orientation
6. Gender Reassignment
7. Race/People when English is not their first language
8. Religion or belief
9. Sex

Local characteristics: People on Low Income; Geographical location; Caring responsibilities; Rurality; Military service

Assessments

Assessments and recommendations are made by our Health and Safety team. Guidance has also been received from the SCC Equalities Officer and the Equalities Employment Officer.

Health and Safety Officer

A Health Officer will give recommendations and possibly reassess individuals. Following the move into a Smart Office environment, staff will be requested to complete a DSE assessment in line within a month of moving. Staff will have the opportunity to discuss any concerns, and issues raised will be fed back to line management.

It has not been possible to get accurate figures for staff that have been assessed by Access to Work as these assessments are undertaken by an external organisation who is not obligated to share any information regarding the staff they assess. The information is highly confidential and only to be shared with the individual in question and their line manager. As stated above, we do give these individuals the opportunity to share this information with us in order to accommodate their needs within any new Smart office environment.

The SCC Staff Workforce Monitoring Report as of March 2018 is provided as a published Appendix to the A Block final business case.

Consultation

The Network for Employees with a Disability (NED) were consulted during the 2012-2016 Smart Office programme implementation. The list of questions and answers which addressed concerns raised by the NED group and the actions that will/are being taken to resolve them for the A Block refurbishment project are a published Appendix to the A Block final business case.

Regarding parking throughout the County, we will follow the 'Travel and Subsistence' policy which states:

"The Council will not reimburse in respect of parking and similar fines, or commuting expenditure or the cost of parking at the permanent workplace. This includes returning to work part way through the day where the employee incurs parking costs that may not have applied if they had not travelled on business." <http://extranet.somerset.gov.uk/hr/allowances-expenses-and-travel/travel-and-sutransport-and-subsistence/?assetdet964527=38310>

See table of offices/staff affected by parking in section 1.

SCC staff are not entitled to parking at SCC office bases as part of their terms and conditions of employment but a number of parking spaces at current satellite offices will be impacted. Under the County Hall parking review SCC will be looking to provide business parking for any member of staff who needs it; this will be part of wider changes of behaviour around business travel. Staff who have accessibility needs will be provided with parking at County Hall. SCC will need to provide additional loading/unloading spaces at County Hall as well as additional short stay spaces which will be delivered through the Parking Charges policy, when adopted.

	Parking as is (end 2018)	Parking to be (2020)
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Staff	<p>Staff in satellite offices have limited parking spaces available;</p> <p>Staff working at County Hall use public transport, their own transport or have allocated on site parking pass</p>	<p>Existing loading/unloading spaces at County Hall will be retained; passes for staff who need to use vehicles for work; pool cars; Existing and additional loading/unloading/ short stay parking spaces at County Hall will be provided; awaiting implementation of County Hall parking charges policy, being delivered outside the scope of the A Block refurb project</p> <p>Revised County Hall parking charges implemented</p>
Members	<p>Parking spaces in the Well and at the front of A Block; parking spaces around Shire Hall and in underground on Full Council days</p>	<p>Revised County Hall parking charges will not affect Member parking</p>
Customers	<p>10 bookable visitor parking spaces for visitors to senior management</p> <p>3 general visitor parking spaces outside B Ground (30 minutes)</p> <p>3 visitor spaces outside front of A Block (not time limited)</p>	<p>No significant changes anticipated. Accessible visitor spaces outside A Block are likely to be available by the end of the refurbishment project</p>

Display Screen Equipment (DSE) and Accessibility Questionnaires

Our Business as Usual (BAU) processes will ensure the majority of people directly impacted will have undergone a DSE assessment shortly after their move into their new team zone.

The project team will give all staff relocating into A Block the opportunity to share information via an accessibility questionnaire, facilitated through their Business Change Managers (BCM's) in order to accommodate the needs of individuals. However this is confidential information and there is no obligation for staff to share this information with anyone other than their line manager who can then take action on their behalf. All members of staff have the opportunity to complete an Accessibility Questionnaire to state whether they have had an assessment to work, DSE or Occupational Health Assessment.

Carpet

The carpet will be selected for comfort, quality and to help reduce noise levels. The carpet meets ISO standards for compliant with the Equality Act 2010. Learning lessons following the completion of B Block Smart Office, the carpet specification being offered for A Block is being tested with manual wheelchair users during 2018 to ensure the carpet installed within A Block is easily navigable throughout the building for manual wheelchair users.

Translation and Interpretation

Translation and interpretation services are available for people where English is not their first language.

Workplace Coordinators

With the relocation of staff there will be a cultural change for all staff relocating to SMART Offices from non-SMART Offices. Workplace Coordinators will be available to assist in every aspect of orientation, and support and field any questions if necessary. Line managers will be available to support people with any need, requirement or concern, on an individual basis, and escalate if necessary.

Individual Tours

To mitigate impact on protected characteristic groups and individuals.

Tours will be available on a one-to-one basis for staff moving into A Block – these will be facilitated either by a workplace coordinator or one of the project team and will provide an opportunity to discuss in private any accessibility needs, cultural requirements, and address any concerns. This will then feed back to the project team as an additional safety net/feedback mechanism, to address any additional needs/requirements, such as speciality chairs, equalities software, space allocation etc...that have not in the first instance been picked up through the accessibility questionnaires, and BCM's.

Group Tours, (providing peer support)

For all staff groups identified for moving into A Block, tours will provide peer support opportunities to be able to view the Smart Office layout, ask any questions about facilities within a supportive group environment.

Feedback

We will provide feedback mechanisms for staff, service users and customers.

We will be committed to undertaking reviews on how accessible and effective our complaints procedures are for staff from equalities communities, staff, customers, and service users.

Surveys

We will capture essential cultural aspects of information within our surveys, providing a baseline survey to all impacted groups, and a follow up survey to ascertain cultural impacts which may need to be addressed.

Quiet Room/Quiet working

A room is being created on A1 as a County Hall staff mindfulness space where staff can come to reflect, relax, pray and practice mindfulness away from their desk. In addition we are looking to introduce private working booths in specific areas of the offices where staff can focus on pieces of work in a quiet environment. We are also looking to introduce stand up telephone call boxes for staff to take confidential calls.

Collaborative/creative working

We are looking to introduce high backed furniture to accommodate groups of 8-10 where teams can work dynamically, creatively as groups where there is an identified need.

The impacts on staff will continue to be assessed through questionnaires, and co-ordinated through Business Change Managers, and consultation. Feedback mechanisms will be put in place through contact with line managers, one to one tours, consultation, assessments etc...

Considering all of the above it is anticipated that the move into Smart Office within A Block should in general have a positive impact, and should improve working practices, and generate efficiencies. Risks have been identified around Equalities and Cultural Changes, and mitigated through the above feedback mechanisms and consultation. This assessment is considered to be under continual review and check points have been embedded into our planning.

Data provided has informed decision making from the design to delivery stages.

All information and data has been treated under the auspices of the Data Protection Act 1998 (and subsequent legislation for legal reasons), and Equalities Act 2010, and new public sector Equality Duty that came into force on April 6th, 2011, the Freedom of information Act 2000 (and subsequent legislation for legal reasons), and the Privacy and Electronic communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003.

Analysis of impact on protected groups

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires us to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service will achieve these aims. In the table below, using the evidence outlined above and your own understanding, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of the three aims of the Public Sector Equality Duty. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, before you have implemented any mitigation.

Protected group	Summary of impact	Negative outcome	Neutral outcome	Positive outcome
Age	For social care visitors, case conference and supervised contact facilities will be provided closest to reception to ensure shortest journeys through the building. On handover of the completed building in 2020 Customers and Communities reception staff and Social Care teams will liaise on managing customer flows. Impact will be monitored through Customer feedback from reception and social care teams	□	□	☒
Disability	There may be specialist requirements of accessibility needs - dependent on disability. Building will need to be accessible to all users including those in manual and automated wheel chairs. Provide Accessibility questions – one to one sessions provide a forum where staff can contribute to the design and feedback on accessibility needs. NED a Questionnaire provided and mechanism for feedback and also tours can be arranged. Feedback mechanisms from, one to one's, forums, training provided, all staff provided with equalities assessments– and mitigation. All feedback from NED will be addressed	□	□	☒

Carpet is DDA compliant to BSI standards, and testing of sample by users of manual wheelchairs is taking place to ensure this is installed throughout the building. Demonstration of improved accessibility for wheelchair users – Be tested and signed off prior to any implementation

A Block lift refurb requires wheelchair users to reverse into the lift once called to access to controls; yellow paint will identify the lip from the lift onto the basement floor. Feedback from BCMs and WPCs post occupation

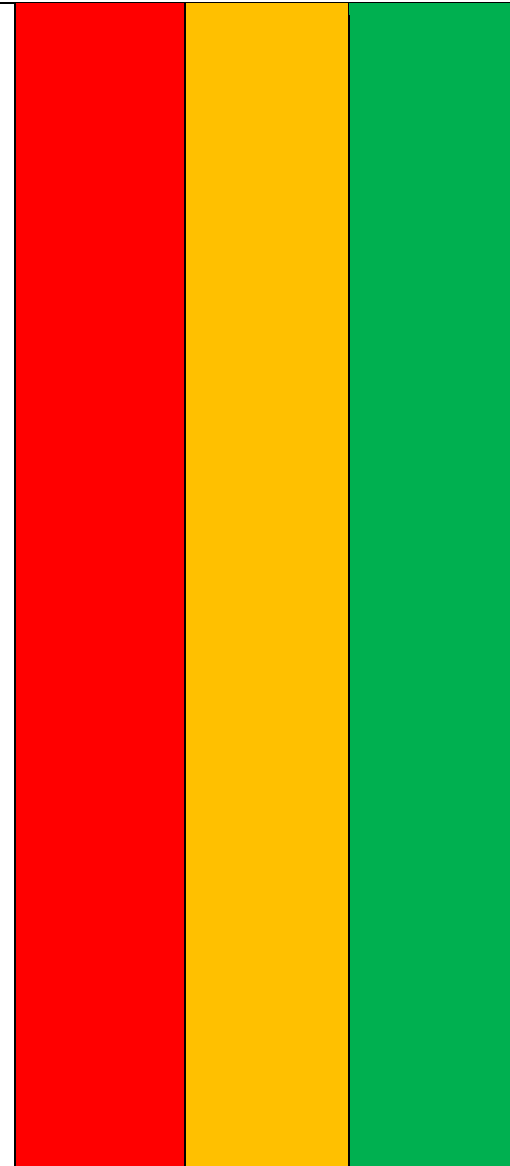
PEEPs will be required for staff who require help to exit the building in an emergency. Feedback from FM and WPCs following emergency evacuation incidents

Braille signage will be incorporated where appropriate.

Stress of moving (affecting mental health) will be addressed through regular meetings with BCMs and line managers of those affected to support through the change journey. Feedback from BCMs taking the 'temperature' of staff change responses.

Accessible parking space/s outside A Block for visitors is being looked at, in conjunction with design and Heritage constraints, as AG will be the main reception for visitors to County Hall. Feedback from reception team from visitors

Loading/unloading bays close to staff entrances will be reviewed and capacity increased where possible for staff who may have difficulty lifting and moving heavy or cumbersome items. Feedback from staff through FM team



Gender reassignment	<p>A larger space could lead to people considering going through the transgender process feeling less comfortable and confident to do this. Gender specific toilets will continue to be provided in A Block due to Heritage constraints; a new accessible unisex toilet is also installed on each floor of A Block in line with building regulations. Where staff are undergoing gender reassignment it would be the line manager's responsibility to provide support to the individual, using the equalities policy. Feedback from Line Manager and as required necessary mitigation</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>This has been considered and it is not believed there is an impact on this protected characteristic. It would be the line managers responsibility to provide support to the individual, who will also provide training if necessary to the team, using the equalities policy. Feedback to Line Manager and as required necessary mitigation</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pregnancy and maternity	<p>Baby change facilities for visitors will be provided in each of the AG toilets; we are considering trialling a breast feeding chair with high back for mothers who wish to use this facility. For staff members within this category, it would be the line manager's responsibility to provide support to the individual in this regard. Feedback from reception staff (visitors); Line Manager and as required necessary mitigation (for staff and Members)</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	<p>This has been considered and it is not believed there is an impact on this protected characteristic. Translation and interpretation services provided on request, all training provided in plain English, clear signposting support for any particular needs - determined by line manager. Ideally picked up at induction stage. Welcome signage in a variety of languages will be considered and incorporated. Internal wayfinding for visitors could be multi lingual if deemed appropriate. Feedback from visitors to reception staff</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Religion or belief	Providing a quiet room for Members and staff to use for prayer, reflection, meditation and mindfulness, away from the team zones is being provided on A1. The space will be created with a variety of furniture to support a meditative relaxing environment. Feedback to Line Manager and as required necessary mitigation	□	□	☒
Sex	There could be an issue around an open plan office and a lack of modesty screens under the desks. Modesty screens will not be provided as standard but on an as needed basis but this will restrict flexible use of desks which then become 'fixed'. Feedback mechanism provided to raise any concerns or needs It would be the line managers responsibility to provide support to the individual, using the equalities policy. Managers and individuals to ensure staff wear appropriate work attire to the office. Feedback to Line Manager and as required necessary mitigation	□	☒	□
Sexual orientation	This has been considered and it is not believed there is an impact on this protected characteristic. Feedback mechanism provided to raise any concerns or needs. It would be the line managers responsibility to provide support to the individual, who will also provide training if necessary to the team, using the equalities policy.	□	☒	□
Other, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, rurality/isolation, etc.	Costs of travel to alternative work centres could increase the travel cost for low income families. Flexible working and Win 10/Office 365 technology provides staff with the option of working from home or drop in offices elsewhere in the county Mobile working could have a beneficial impact on carers. There is the potential for this to improve the ability for carers to work more effectively around their caring responsibilities. Managers to encourage flexible ways of working following the organisations initiative. The cost of higher rate broadband could make it not cost effective for mobile workers to work from home. If staff are unable to work from	□	□	☒

	<p>home due to the flexibility of the SMART Offices, staff would have the option to either work from an Area Hub or Drop-in office nearest their home</p> <p>There maybe a lack of broadband provision in rural locations of Somerset this could affect mobile workers ability to work from home. Coverage of broadband services in Devon and Somerset has greatly improved in recent years and corporate VPN access is generally reliable. Feedback all to Line Manager and as required necessary mitigation. It would be the line managers responsibility to provide support to the individual, who will also provide training if necessary to the team, using the equalities policy.</p>			
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Negative outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

Action taken/to be taken	Date	Person responsible	How will it be monitored?	Action complete
n/a – see tables above	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>

	Select date			<input type="checkbox"/>
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If negative impacts remain, please provide an explanation below.

n/a

Completed by:

Sian Powell

Date

10/10/18

Signed off by:

Paula Hewitt

Date

December 2018

Equality Lead/Manager sign off date:

Tom Rutland

To be reviewed by: (officer name)

Sian Powell

Review date:

March 2019