

**County Council**

**23 September 2015**



**Accommodation Member Working Group**

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**Report of Corporate Management Team**

**Don McLure, Corporate Director Resources**

**Councillor Simon Henig, Leader of Durham County Council**

**Councillor Alan Napier, Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Finance**

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### **Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To seek Council approval for the setting up of an Accommodation Member Working Group to consider options for the Civic and Democratic requirements in the proposed new city centric council headquarters.

### **Background**

- 2 On 15 July 2015, Cabinet agreed a report on the Update on the Office Accommodation Project and the release of Aykley Heads as a strategic employment site for economic regeneration. In doing so, Cabinet agreed in principal to the relocation of the Council's headquarters to a Durham City centric site subject to an outline business case process and procurement exercise.
- 3 Deloitte RE, our external advisers, are advising on the preparation of the outline business case for the proposed requirements of a new city centric headquarters.
- 4 The report of the 15 July 2015 proposed the beginning of a programme that will create the necessary environment to enable the implementation of a 'new ways of working' concept, which included the implementation of desk ratios of on average 7 desks to 10 employees, complementing working patterns and the needs of various services. The report acknowledged the possibility of a move towards more open style working, fewer cellular offices, more collaborative working styles and less personal organisational records. A staff questionnaire was circulated for completion by staff and over 2,500 have been returned to gather more information about their working patterns, means of travel and economic activity in, or around their current place of work.
- 5 Cabinet was also advised of the likelihood of the need to relocate the archive/county records office, currently in County Hall, and of a separate feasibility study being undertaken with a view to bidding for external funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund in June 2016.
- 6 The feasibility study for the proposed new building also requires an options appraisal for use of space for the Civic and Democratic functions.

## **Proposed Accommodation Member Working Group and Terms of Reference**

- 7 In order to progress the options appraisal for use of space for the Civic and Democratic functions in the proposed new building, Cabinet has requested assistance from cross party Members of the Council to join a working group which will form a consultation group for Deloitte RE and officers in the preparation of the outline business case.
- 8 The proposed Terms of Reference of the Working Group would be to:
- (i) Represent the views of all Members of the Council on the efficient and effective use of civic space in a new headquarters;
  - (ii) Respond to consultation requests in regard to Civic Space by Deloitte RE in preparation of the options appraisal; and
  - (iii) Make recommendations to Cabinet in November 2015 as part of the outline business case options appraisal report.

A more detailed Terms of Reference including the scope of the civic space consultation with the Accommodation Member Working Group is attached at appendix 2

- 9 Cabinet has suggested that the Group should comprise of nine Members, being the Leader and five other Members of the Labour Group (including the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development), plus three other Members, being the leaders of the three principal opposition groups or their representatives. It is proposed that the group be referred to as the 'Accommodation Member Working Group'.

## **Recommendations and Reasons**

- 10 Council is asked to agree:
- (i) the terms of reference of the Accommodation Member Working Group
  - (ii) that the membership of the group comprise of nine Members, being the Leader and five other Members of the Labour Group (including the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Economic Development), plus three other Members, being the leaders of the three principal opposition groups or their representatives.

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## **Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – None specific within this report

**Staffing** - None specific within this report

**Risk** - None specific within this report

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty** - None specific within this report

**Accommodation** - None specific within this report

**Crime and Disorder** - None specific within this report

**Human Rights** - None specific within this report

**Consultation** - None specific within this report

**Procurement** - None specific within this report

**Disability Issues** - None specific within this report

**Legal Implications** - None specific within this report

## Appendix 2

### Proposed Terms of Reference of the Accommodation Member Working Group

There will be three stages to the work of the Accommodation Member Working Group.

#### Stage 1

##### **Purpose**

To engage with members of the Group to gather a robust set of data which will inform the design development of the civic space in the proposed new city centric headquarters.

##### **Methodology:**

The proposed form of engagement with the Group will be through an initial workshop and two site visits to modern examples of civic space, including debating chambers.

Initial workshop will be structured as follows:

- A presentation of the history of civic space
- A review of current provision at County Hall
- A review of modern civic spaces
- A review of opportunities open to the Council

The two site visits will involve a walk around each building followed by a questionnaire which will focus on the Group's opinion on the building they visited.

##### **Output:**

Robust set of data to inform the Outline Business

#### Stage 2

##### **Purpose**

To develop an initial design for review and comment by the Group. At this stage the initial working principles will be checked, challenged and refined if necessary. The preferred option or options will then be tested against a refined brief.

##### **Methodology:**

The design team will use the feedback from the Group's views to develop design concepts, strategic moves and initial space plans. 3d models will be utilised to ensure the design is clearly communicated to members.

**Output:**

Initial design options that will inform the 'Full Employers Requirements'.

**STAGE 3****Purpose**

To develop and refine the design for review and comment by the Group that will include development of materials and specification.

**Methodology:**

The Deloitte RE design team will build upon a preferred option and identify strategic details. Strategic details are key to ensuring that the ideas developed through the working principles and strategic moves will be ultimately delivered.

**Output:**

Finalised information to input into the 'Full Employers Requirements'.