

# **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL OFFICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY 2007 - 2010**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 This is the Council's first office accommodation strategy. The issues which the Strategy is intended to address are:

- To help the Council adopt a planned and structured approach to determining its future office accommodation needs and planning for investment in maintenance, repair and upgrading of the accommodation.
- To match the quantity and disposition of the Council's office accommodation against its likely future needs, including those arising from projected urban growth.
- To respond to Staff Attitude Survey findings about the quality of accommodation and facilities, by improving working conditions and facilities for staff.
- To make proposals for improving the physical accessibility to office premises for staff (and, where appropriate, the public).
- To ensure that environmental sustainability factors are addressed in the Strategy. In particular, to reduce energy consumption and to contribute to the Council's Medium Term Objective to reduce its carbon footprint.
- To ensure health and safety (including fire safety) issues are addressed.
- To agree who "owns" and is responsible for the various areas: departments or Property Services.
- To set acceptable "housekeeping" standards for office premises.
- To achieve efficient space usage.
- To have in place effective maintenance contracts and programmes for planned maintenance to avoid disruption to service delivery.
- To adapt accommodation assets to meet the needs of the Council services in occupation.

- 1.2 The Strategy will need to be a dynamic document and to be formally reviewed and updated annually, especially as other initiatives, such as the Customer Access Strategy, are rolled out.
- 1.3 There are two aspects to the Strategy: sufficiency and location of the Council's office accommodation and its condition/fitness for purpose.
- 1.4 In terms of the vision relating to these two aspects, the following assumptions have been made:
- the Council will continue to use the Guildhall as its main civic base for the foreseeable future
  - the Council will focus its customer services on the new centre in Mandela House
  - the Council is unlikely to wish to surrender Hobson House to the Cambridge United Charities, given the comparatively favourable terms under which that building is occupied, in accordance with the Charity Scheme
  - the Council should, over time and funding permitting, aspire to bring all its office accommodation up to the standard of Lion House
  - the Council will aim to realise efficiencies from its office accommodation where it can, in order to release Lion House in future, if possible – or other office accommodation if circumstances change
  - that the Strategy for office use should aim to reduce the Council's carbon footprint, e.g. by encouraging and supporting home or remote working where possible.

## 2. SUFFICIENCY & LOCATION

### 2.1 Current position

#### Office premises the Council currently occupies

- 2.1.1 The Council's office accommodation portfolio consists mainly of properties acquired some time ago. The main buildings occupied as office accommodation are shown, together with their tenure, in the following table.

Building	Tenure	Comments
Guildhall	Freehold	The Council's civic and democratic centre and likely to remain so for the foreseeable future.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Hobson House	Freehold owned by Cambridge United Charities, but Council has the right to occupy rent-free under the Charity Scheme of 1897 provided it continues to use it for local government purposes	Given the Council's rights of occupation, there is no gain to the Council in seeking to move from Hobson House, as the building would revert to the Charity. The Council would not be able to sell or lease out the building.
Mandela House	Freehold	Mandela is due to become the location of the Customer Service Centre from 2008 and is therefore assumed to be required for this purpose for the foreseeable future.
Lion House	Leasehold (lease runs until 2014)	The Finance (part) and HR departments were relocated here in 2004 from Downing Street, to make way for the Grand Arcade development. The Council spent £270,000 in fitting out the accommodation to modern standards.
City Homes North	Freehold	These offices were purpose built for housing management services on land owned by the Council in 1998.
City Homes South	Leasehold (lease runs until 2009)	Location for housing management services south of the river.
Parson's Court & 2 Wheeler Street	Freehold	If the Guildhall Working Party's proposals proceed, the Box Office will be relocated here, alongside accommodation currently occupied by Arts & Entertainments. This includes the former Age Concern Drop in Centre and a commercial shop property.
Mill Road Depot	Freehold	Although primarily the operational depot for City Services, there is also a considerable amount of office accommodation here. Although the site has potential for residential development, any relocation of the depot would be expensive to achieve and is not proposed at the moment.

<b>Building</b>	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Community Centres	Freehold	Although primarily intended for community use, there is also office space at most community centres, in most cases for 1 or 2 people only, except at the Meadows, where 13 staff are accommodated.

*NB; although the Guildhall also contains the Council's Committee Rooms and Council Chamber and the Large & Small Halls, issues relating to these premises are outside of the scope of this Strategy, which focuses on accommodation used as offices.*

### **Sufficiency of accommodation in space terms**

2.1.2 Complaints have been made in the past by some staff about overcrowded offices. Some reorganisations were carried out in the Guildhall in 2005, which have addressed this issue in the most overcrowded areas of that building. There remain some areas of staff dissatisfaction in Hobson House and Mandela House.

2.1.3 A survey of all office areas and occupancy levels was undertaken by the Building Surveyor in April/May 2006 and the space allocation was compared to "industry standards". There appears to be no legal minimum office occupancy level. The Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) for the Workplace H&S Regulations recommends a minimum of 3.7 sq.m per person, including desk & chair. Figures provided from a survey of local authorities by CIPFA provide a range of areas from 4sq. m for clerical workers to 13 sq.m for surveyors/architects. Experience of occupancies in Council offices has shown that 5 - 8 sq.m is a reasonable range, depending on local circumstances, such as the amount of equipment (e.g. PCs, drawing boards, filing, printers etc) and the room layout.

2.1.4 In the rooms inspected, in no cases did the occupancy level fall below 5 sq m. The conclusion therefore is that generally office overcrowding is not a problem. However, offices can seem cramped if they are poorly laid out or inappropriately furnished and managed. Property & Building Services can offer advice on occupancy of offices, including advice on space planning, and in some instances local problem areas could be resolved by better space management by departments

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To provide floorspace in office buildings to a standard of 5 – 8 sq.m per staff member.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Keep space allocations under review.	Building Surveyor & Facilities Manager (BSFM).	Ongoing.

Use proper space planning techniques when planning office moves or refurbishments	Departments, with advice from Property & Building Services.	Ongoing.
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## 2.2 The future – what/how much will we need and where?

There are several factors affecting this:

- **Urban growth**

2.2.1 16,900 new homes are scheduled to be built in and around the City between 1999 & 2016 and 13,000 will be on major sites that straddle the boundary between the City and South Cambs. This level of urban growth will impact on many of the Council's services. For some services, this growth may not be catered for within current staffing levels without a deterioration in the standards or levels of service to the public. Additional staff may be required.

- **Customer Access proposals**

2.2.2 The Council approved a funding package on 20 July 2006 to implement a new Customer Access Strategy (CAS). The new strategy involves improving the website to encourage customers to use it to access more services, setting up a new corporate help desk to deal with telephone calls across all Council services and setting up a new corporate reception area, which will cover all services, at Mandela House. This new Customer Access Strategy is intended to help the Council respond to the increased demand on its services from the urban growth referred to above, as well as improving levels and speed of service to the public.

2.2.3 On the one hand, the CAS will require space to be released in Mandela House, to accommodate the new telephone service centre and face-to-face reception service. On the other hand, the basis of the business case is that efficiencies will be driven out from front office operations as services migrate to CAS, equivalent to just over 50 members of staff, spread across departments. We can also expect efficiencies – as yet unquantified – in back office operations as services roll out to CAS and business processes are re-engineered.

- **New ways of working**

2.2.4 Increasingly, new technology enables new ways of working, many of which could result in a reduced demand for office space. The Council agreed in July 2006 to invest in Document Image Processing (DIP) and Electronic Document & Records Management (EDRM). These technologies enable documents to be scanned in, then dealt with and stored electronically. This will, over time, substantially reduce the need

for space for filing and working on paper documents. Indeed, the Council needs to set itself targets to release space in this way.

2.2.5 Mobile and home working are becoming increasingly common. Mobile working enables officers “out on the patch” to communicate with their back office systems in real time, both to access data and to send data to those systems for processing or storage. This can reduce the need for return to the office between visits, or enable officers to “hot desk” when they do need to be in the office. Home working enables some officers to work from their own homes for part or most of their working hours; only needing to come into the office occasionally for team meetings or supervisions, though the number of staff that could be allowed to work this way is currently uncertain.

2.2.6 All these developments should contribute to the Council’s sustainability and carbon reduction objectives, by reducing travel to and/or at work.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To make maximum practicable use of new ways of working to free up office accommodation.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
As part of the DIP Project, set challenging but achievable targets for the release of filing and document storage space.	Head of ICT Client Services and Corporate Management Team.	During 2007
Develop a policy framework and guidelines for remote, mobile or home working.	Head of Human Resources	During 2007

- **Proposals for redeveloping part of the ground floor of the Guildhall**

2.2.7 Proposals for making alternative use of the ground floor of the Guildhall have recently been approved in principle. These involve:

- relocating the TIC and Box Office from the rotunda building and corner of Peas Hill/Wheeler Street. The TIC would be accommodated in the old Crown Court accommodation; the Box Office in premises in Parson’s Court/Wheeler Street
- letting the vacated space to a café/restaurant operator to generate income

2.2.8 These proposals are relatively self-contained. The only major impact on office space generally will be the loss of space in the former Crown Court which is currently being used as officer meeting rooms and consequent pressure on other available meeting space in the Guildhall.

## **2.3 Views of Heads of Service**

- 2.3.1 As part of the research prior to developing this Strategy, a questionnaire was sent to all Heads of Service in May 2006. This asked them about the sufficiency and suitability of location of the space occupied by their team(s); the adequacy of the kitchen, rest room and toilet facilities; improvement/refurbishment needs; and scope for mobile or home working.
- 2.3.2 All HoS responded to this. Immediate demands for extra office space were in the region of 10 workspaces and these have now been accommodated. In the future, urban growth may require additional spaces in Planning Policy & Projects and in Community Services. Spaces in the ground floor of the Guildhall/former Crown Court have been allocated to the CAS team. Several HoS commented that DIP would reduce storage space needs. Significant scope for home or remote working was seen in Revenues & Benefits, Building Control, Housing Technical Services, HR and Internal Audit. There was limited or occasional scope elsewhere.
- 2.3.3 Most comments centred around the quality of accommodation and facilities.

## **2.4 Freeing up office accommodation**

- 2.4.1 In the short-term, implementing the CAS is likely to cause more pressure on office accommodation. Space will have to be found for Housing Needs and some Benefits staff to make way for the new Customer Service Centre and we will definitely need temporary decant space while CAS building works are carried out. Space will also be needed for an assessment (recruitment) centre for the new CAS staff and for their initial training and this is likely to involve hiring facilities.
- 2.4.2 A Project Appraisal has been agreed to move the Housing Technical Team to Mill Road Depot, so they are close to their two Decent Homes contractors: City Services and Apollo. This will free up space at the rear of Hobson House which currently accommodates 13 staff. This should be sufficient to give some decant space while the Customer Service Centre building works are taking place and permanent replacement office space for those displaced to make way for the Service Centre. Detailed plans have been developed as part of the CAS Accommodation Workstream.
- 2.4.3 We will also need to re-consider the location of back office teams under CAS. For instance, will it make more sense to move individuals or teams currently not located in Mandela/Hobson to there, so they are close to the Customer Service Centre in the event of face-to-face advice being required which the Service Centre operatives are unable to deal with?

- 2.4.4 In the medium to long term, as staffing and storage efficiencies from CAS and DIP are realised, pockets of office space will also become available. It is difficult to tell at the moment whether these will be in readily usable chunks or spread around here and there. However, the aim should be to rationalise such space, so that sensible chunks of accommodation are freed up for reallocation. There will need to be increased central control over the allocation of office accommodation to realise this aim. Otherwise, departments may regard the odd spaces here and there freed up as “theirs” and expand into them in a fairly ad hoc manner.
- 2.4.5 It should be noted that the costings for CAS deliberately excluded the costs of “knock-on” moves and relocations, to limit project creep. These will therefore have to be funded separately and this needs to be addressed early on to avoid adverse impacts on the CAS timetable.
- 2.4.6 In simple numerical terms, if we realise 54 FTE staffing efficiencies and corresponding office space, this should enable us eventually to consolidate our central city office space into the Guildhall (+ Parson’s Court), Hobson and Mandela Houses. We should look at the feasibility of not renewing the lease on Lion House in 2014. Coincidentally, Lion House accommodates around 50 staff. However, it also houses the Training Room, the IT Training Room and 3 meeting rooms, which would also need to be replaced.
- 2.4.7 A further issue which may impact on office accommodation needs is that future decisions on the viability of the two City Homes’ offices are to be considered in the context of the wider pressures on the HRA and in the context of how services develop and the offices are used as the customer access strategy is implemented.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To release by 2014 at least one building currently occupied as offices.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Rationalise departmental occupations as space is realised from the CAS moves or new ways of working.	Director of Central Services	Ongoing to 2010
Implement more central control over allocation and use of accommodation.	CMT	2007
Investigate feasibility of not renewing Lion House lease	Head of Property & Building Services (HoPBS)	Begin consideration in 2010



### **3. CONDITION OF ACCOMMODATION AND INVESTMENT NEEDS**

3.1 As indicated above, it is the condition of office accommodation and the lack of facilities which causes more staff complaint than the lack of space in itself. Appendix 1 summarises the results of recent staff consultation exercises which have resulted in comments in this respect.

3.2 These results were confirmed by comments made in the Heads of Service questionnaires referred to in para 2.3.1.

3.3.1 The results of the Building Surveyor's inspection of the facilities are as follows:

- **Toilet Facilities**

The provision of toilet facilities for staff generally meets the requirements of the ACOP with regard to facilities readily available for the numbers of staff. The areas where this could be queried are

- a. The Guildhall Wheeler St Annex Ground floor, where the nearest toilets are on the first floor.
- b. Hobson House Ground Floor, where the nearest toilets are on the first floor of the main building or in the Active Communities area across the courtyard or in Mandela House.

Toilet facilities are otherwise generally adequate, although most could benefit from cosmetic improvements or a facelift. The Guildhall original toilets are considered by some to require improvement, but this has already been carried out once and more radical improvements are constrained by the building's listed status.

- **Staff canteen/rest facilities**

- c. While all offices inspected have adequate kitchen facilities for preparing drinks, Mandela House and the Guildhall are generally lacking in staff rest room and food preparation areas away from the workplace. Kitchen /rest areas with seating are as follows:
- d. Guildhall
  - i. 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor E&P kitchen
  - ii. Annexe basement
- e. Hobson House
  - i. 1st floor kitchen
- f. Mandela House
  - i. Ground floor rear of Housing Needs
- g. Lion House
- h. Community Development properties generally have access to canteen/seating areas.

Staff rest room and kitchen facilities are good in Lion House but inadequate in The Guildhall and Mandela House.

- 3.4 Internal standards for such matters as temperature and lighting were drawn up by Property & Building Services and approved by CMT in 2004. These are attached at Appendix 3. Officers have reviewed them and consider them still to be relevant

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To provide reasonable internal standards for accommodation.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Confirm and publicise 2004 standards.	HoPBS	During 2007
Check compliance.	BSFM	Ongoing

- 3.5 Appendix 2 lists for information work undertaken recently in the office buildings.

### 3.6 Funding improvements and maintenance

- 3.6.1 There is a R & R fund for the admin buildings (and a separate one for City Homes offices) and a rolling 20-year plan for spending against this. This usually relates to major repairs or improvements to the fabric of the buildings or works to renew /reinforce services.

- 3.6.2 In general, if departments wish to make improvements to their accommodation for business reasons, or to improve conditions for staff, they are expected to fund these themselves, either from existing budgets or by making a budget bid. An alternative is to transfer these budgets so they are held centrally, by Property & Building Services. This would help to give a more uniform standard of accommodation throughout the Council, and improved long term planning, but there are issues over who would administer and allocate the funding for improvement projects. This could also result in increased costs once responsibility was relinquished by departments and expectations increased. There are also practical difficulties of organising work cyclically compared with present less frequent demands linked to reorganisations. This needs further thought and CMT consideration.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To rationalise and centralise budgets and programming for office maintenance & improvements.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Obtain CMT approval & director buy in.	HoPBS	During 2007
Prepare programme of redecoration /re-carpeting	BSFM	During 2007

### 3.7 What more could be done?

3.7.1 The following categories of work should be looked at:

- toilet improvements
- lighting
- heating, temperature, ventilation
- kitchens, rest rooms
- prayer rooms/quiet rooms
- meeting rooms
- more sustainable: recycling, energy consumption
- accessibility
- cleaning standards

3.7.2 Some of these works are already programmed, funded from R & R or successful capital bids:

<b>Admin Buildings R&amp;R Fund</b>			
<b>Items affecting internal office environments</b>			
Plus approved capital bid items			
	<b>06/07</b> £	<b>07/08</b> £	<b>08/09</b> £
<b>GUILDHALL</b>			
Office lighting replacement	5,000 +20,000 approved bid		
Corridor lighting	11,000		
Corridor carpet replacement	5,000	5,000	5,000
<b>HOBSON HOUSE</b>			
Refurbish Active Communities' kitchen	3889		
Renew fire alarm system	20,000		
Replace Emergency lighting	10,000		

<b>MANDELA HOUSE</b>			
Office lighting	15,000		
Emergency lighting	10,000		
Window replacement-front elevation –to be completed in Sept 06	40,000		
Carpet renewal common areas		5,000	5,000
<b>PARSON'S COURT</b>			
Emergency lighting renewal	5,000		

### 3.7.3 Possible additional improvements to address staff concerns:

#### 3.7.3.1 Individual Offices

Offices are normally redecorated at the service department's request and paid for by them. Property & Building Services arrange redecoration or carpet replacement upon request. The present arrangement tends to put the onus on departments to decide when their offices are re-carpeted or redecorated. To achieve more equality between departments it may be desirable for this responsibility to be centralised on Property & Building Services to arrange and be funded from the admin building R&R or increased provision in the admin building cost centres. It would be normal practice to redecorate offices on a five yearly cycle. Office redecoration on a 5-yearly cycle would have the following implications:

1. Considerable increase in redecoration budget
2. Disruption to staff as offices need to be cleared & re occupied
3. Difficulty in finding decorators to work out of hours
4. Staffing resources would be stretched in Technical Services as redecoration now requires input in seeking quotes, removals, pre-decoration repairs removing shelves etc, often carpet replacement, liaising with SERCO etc.

Carpets in offices are properly cleaned infrequently and stains such as spilt coffee are allowed to dry rather than being cleaned off immediately. An improved regime of carpet shampooing should and can be incorporated into the office-cleaning contract. The existing contract provides for this 6-monthly but City Services find this difficult to carry out due to problem with pre-tidying rooms.

The proposed lighting improvements referred to in Section 3 should provide a brighter working environment.

Inappropriate colour schemes are sometimes selected by occupants where a neutral colour can give a better impression of light and space.

Renewal of office furniture with coordinated items (in conjunction with redecoration and re carpeting) can make the biggest contribution to the quality of the office environment and this has traditionally been down to departments. Facilities Management could have a role to coordinate specialists where departments require. Perhaps we should seek tenders for consultancy services in this area for a Council-wide contract.

### **3.7.3.2 Lack of Rest Rooms, Prayer/Quiet Rooms and Kitchen Facilities**

The demand for office space and the relative inflexibility of older office buildings is such that departments do not have space available for such rooms. It is not usually possible to create "extra" space for this purpose, so provision of additional facilities is dependant on office or other workspace being given up.

A Prayer Room has been provided in Lion House, but it is the only one so far in Council office buildings.

### **3.7.3.3 Temperature and lighting**

Offices in the admin buildings have in the past had light fittings upgraded to Cat.2 type which are more suitable for VDU display work when refurbishment has taken place. Finance has been allocated in the Admin Buildings R&R Fund and in an approved bid for a programme of lighting upgrading to all offices which will include Cat 2 fittings and low energy desk mounted task lighting. These will also reduce energy consumption.

New controls and variable speed pumps were fitted to the Guildhall heating system in advance of winter 2006/07 which will improve control over the heating distribution and prevent the hot and cold spots experienced in the past.

A new fan assisted flue system has been fitted to the Mandela House boilers in summer 2006 which will give slightly improved efficiency and better safety.

## **3.8 Investment Plan**

Proposals for additional specific improvements to address staff concerns.

### **3.8.1 Rest Rooms**

Creation of a kitchen/restroom forms the next stage in the Environment & Planning Department's proposals for reconfiguring their accommodation on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Guildhall and would be available to other departments located on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor. The same adaptation could be carried out at 4<sup>th</sup> floor level

At first floor level, a significant amount of the floor area is taken up with the Civic Suite and supporting offices and it is difficult to envisage where a staff facility could be incorporated. It may be possible to provide a shared facility for the ground and 1<sup>st</sup> floor staff within the adaptations that will be necessary when the reception desk is closed or re-configured as a "meet & greet" point for visitors to Guildhall staff on transfer of services to the Service Centre. Staff at the rear of the Guildhall also need a rest room but further consideration of this should be deferred pending the outcome of the Guildhall Working Party's proposals for alternative uses for that part of the building.

The actual cost of creating a staff rest room per se is not high provided the space selected has ready access to services, particularly including drainage. This can be a limiting factor in the Guildhall where all the drainage services are at the rear of the building into the light wells.

The scope for creating further rest rooms exists in Hobson House and Mandela House and opportunities have been missed in the recent past because of competing priorities for offices or meeting rooms. Ideally rest rooms should be sited on each floor where floor area and staff numbers justify this. Remote or inconvenient rest rooms are underutilised and little better than no provision at all. The existing first floor kitchen/rest room area in Hobson House has been upgraded in 2006 and is proving very popular with staff.

The design of the staff facilities for the new Customer Service Centre will need to include adequate rest room and kitchen space.

The Staff Surveys, as well as mentioning kitchen facilities, also raised the issue of a staff canteen. In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Council did run a staff canteen in the Guildhall basement. However, use gradually decreased and it was no longer possible to fund this facility. Such an operation is likely to be even more unviable now, given the plethora of sandwich etc facilities in the city centre, so this suggestion has not been pursued.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To use some space released as CAS progresses to make proper kitchen, rest room and prayer room provision.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Monitor CAS-released space & allocate some to provide additional kitchen /staff rest room and prayer room facilities (especially in Mandela house and the Guildhall ground and first floors).	BSFM	2007 onwards

### 3.8.2 Toilet Accommodation

The Guildhall staff toilets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors were converted to modern standards before the building was listed. After listing, all remaining 1930's original toilets had their terrazzo repaired, cleaned and re-polished and fixtures and fittings overhauled. The success of these refurbishments seems to depend on the amount of natural light reaching the toilets in question; for example at 4<sup>th</sup> floor level with good natural light the overhauled 1930's toilets are acceptable but a combination of brown terrazzo and poor natural lighting at lower levels of the building (from deep light wells) creates an unsatisfactory impression on staff and visitors alike. It is possible that some visual improvement could be achieved with additional and higher intensity lighting but scope for other improvements needs to be explored with the Conservation Officer.

At the rear of The Guildhall, in Hobson House, Mandela House and Parson's Court there is scope to carry out a speeded up rolling programme of staff toilet improvements, if funding were made available. Improvements could range from complete refurbishment, including the renewal of the sanitary ware in some locations, to lesser schemes of redecoration, new mirrors, surfaces and improved lighting.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To establish a rolling programme for toilet refurbishments and upgrades.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Draw up a programme of refurbishments and ensure these can be funded from R&R or make capital bid	BSFM	According to availability of funding but at least one upgrade per annum

### 3.9 Listed Building issues and other constraints

3.9.1 Two of the Council's office buildings, the Guildhall and Hobson House, are Listed Buildings and Mandela House and Parson's Court are in

Conservation Areas This is not so much of an issue for carrying out straightforward repairs but can cause delays where improvements or upgrades involve permanent change to the building fabric. For the Guildhall, there is a Conservation Plan which highlights the sensitive areas. Where change is sufficient to require a Listed Building application, this can mean lengthy preparation and pre application discussions with conservation officers and then a period of 12 weeks for consent to be granted and this does need to be built into the timetabling of any programmes of works. It also means that where more major alterations are required, the Building Surveyor may need to engage the services of Conservation Architects. The same comments apply to Hobson House although a Conservation Plan has not been prepared for this building. The features of interest there are generally the exterior and some of the circulation areas rather than the offices themselves.

3.9.2 There are other constraints on carrying out works at the Guildhall. Difficulties are often more related to the structure than its Listed status. Examples would be: -

- Heating panels embedded in concrete suspended ceilings restrict potential for fixings in ceilings.
- Structural capacity and status of partitions (i.e. are they load-bearing?) does not appear to be uniform from floor to floor.
- Potential for drainage connections is confined to the rear light wells of the building and cast iron drainpipes are difficult to connect into.
- Lack of natural light in some corridors.
- Very solid concrete and brick construction in some parts of the building is difficult to work with and causes considerable noise problems for all occupants of the building if works are carried out during office hours.
- Different levels of ceiling between offices and corridors restrict potential for removing corridor partitions as edges of ceiling have to be supported.

### **3.10 Air conditioning**

This probably merits special mention, as it is an area of potential conflict with our carbon reduction/energy saving aims and/or a strategic risk for the Council. If we continue to have very hot summers because of climate change, it is very likely that we will see more demand from staff for air conditioning to be provided. Many of the offices which do not have air-conditioning experienced unbearable temperatures during the summer 2006 heatwave. This inevitably results in a loss of productivity and effective working amongst staff, as well as being uncomfortable for them. In one or two cases, staff felt unwell enough to have to go home.



### 3.11 Health & Safety, including fire safety

Obviously, the Council must ensure that its office buildings comply with all relevant health and safety legislation. This includes the requirements for fire safety, fire risk assessments, legionella testing and portable appliance testing. Fire risk assessments are now the responsibility of the Council, with the Fire Service being the enforcing authority.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To ensure compliance with health & safety and fire safety legislation.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Ensure that responsible officers are designated for health and safety and fire risk assessments in all office buildings.	Director of Central Services and Director of City Services (as H & S champion)	Ongoing
Ensure fire risk assessments are updated every 3 years	Responsible officers	Ongoing
Maintain regime of regular condition inspections of offices, corridors and cloakrooms	Facilities Team	Ongoing
Report and health and safety risks to the Facilities Team	All staff	Ongoing

### 3.12 Environmental & sustainability issues

The Environmental Strategy Group (ESG) in 2004/2005 authorised bids to be made to undertake some energy efficiency work recommended by the Energy Auditor appointed by the Carbon Trust. The bids were successful and work to install new high frequency lighting fittings, new variable speed heating pumps and heating controls is being undertaken during 2006/2007. Another series of bids has been authorised by ESG and these relate to reducing energy used in lighting, to better responsive heating controls and the proposed installation of wind turbines on the Guildhall.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To ensure implementation of the recommendations in the energy management report compiled by the Carbon Trust.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Energy consumption monitored and targeted.	Central Services – Technical Services Manager	Ongoing with an annual report – from June 2007
Implementation of the Energy Auditor’s recommendations	Central Services – Technical Services Manager	2006/2007 bids to be completed by March 2007

Acquire Council's electricity supplies from green/renewable source	Central Services – Technical Services Manager	100 kW sites – October 2008. Sub-100 kW sites – May 2008
Investigate the use of renewable energy systems in admin buildings	Central Services – Technical Services Manager	Ongoing – bid submitted in October 2006

### 3.13 Accessibility

An Access Survey was carried out in 2002 by a specialist in accessibility issues and, where practicable, the recommendations of this have been implemented. However, there are still accessibility issues for staff in some of the Council's buildings, notably Hobson House and Parson's Court. There has also recently been a major failure affecting the lift in Mandela house, which created problems for staff and visitors with disabilities or who were otherwise unable to use stairs.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To improve the accessibility of the Council's buildings, where possible, for staff with disabilities.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Carry out additional accessibility improvements as necessary, to improve areas where there are accessibility problems, to meet particular needs and to comply with developing legislation, subject to funding and viability of solutions.	HoPBS	Throughout the Strategy period.
To consult with disabled staff, through the Disabled Staff Group, to better understand their accessibility issues in relation to their office accommodation.	HoPBS	During 2007 initially, then throughout the Strategy period.

### 3.14 Frequency of redecoration, furniture upgrades etc "housekeeping standards", cleaning standards

It would be helpful to have some "housekeeping standards" for our office accommodation, which set out the expectations from Facilities Management and from occupying departments in turn.

Similarly, the arrangements and standards for office cleaning have not been reviewed for some time. These should be looked at and the Council should

consider whether it could get better value for money by tendering the cleaning contract. Allied to this, we should investigate the feasibility, as the DIP project rolls out across the Council, of having a “clear desk” policy in offices. This would enable higher cleaning standards to be implemented.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To have clearer and higher standards for tidiness and cleanliness in the office environment.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Draw up and agree housekeeping standards for the office accommodation.	BSFM – for approval by CMT	By June 2007
Review the office cleaning arrangements.	HoPBS + Director of City Services	By June 2007
Investigate a clear desk policy as part of DIP implementation.	Director of Central Services/Head of ICT Client Services/Head of Human Resources	By 2008

### 3.15 Taking a longer term view

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services & Resources is keen that we investigate the practicality and costings of a broad strategy for the Guildhall over 5 years or so that would upgrade the accommodation on a systematic basis (e.g. a floor at a time). This would be a change from the current approach of doing either small projects or those that are required because of safety issues and would represent better value for the investment involved. This would probably involve decanting staff and services and is therefore only likely to be achievable (funding considerations aside) as and when space is freed up as a result of the CAS efficiencies. Once this has been rolled out to the Guildhall, it should be extended to the other office buildings.

<b>Strategy Aim:</b> To investigate a 5-year plan (commencing in 2009/10) for a systematic and phased upgrading of the interior of the Guildhall, a floor at a time.		
<b>Action</b>	<b>Lead</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Develop outline plans and costings for improvements which could be made to each floor of the Guildhall which would comply with the Conservation Plan for the building	Property & Building Services, in consultation with Conservation Officers	During 2007
Investigate feasibility and scope for carrying these out, e.g. impact on services; potential for decanting staff.	HoPBS	During 2007

### OFFICE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY – STAFF/UNION CONSULTATION RESULTS

#### STAFF SURVEY 2003

“respondents are most likely to express disagreement that working conditions at the Council have improved in the past two years (36%)”

#### STAFF FOCUS GROUPS 2004

“The second major area of dissatisfaction with working conditions mentioned in all three groups is poor office accommodation. Some staff complain that their offices are old, cramped and do not always provide the necessary kitchen/canteen facilities or rest areas. As a result, some staff eat at their desks and do not take a proper lunch break. It is felt that the lack of rest areas also hinders staff from talking and socialising with colleagues, which is considered to be an important aspect of working life.

*[“What comes to mind when we talk about working conditions at the city council?”]*

- Old building. It’s not suitable for the twenty-first century (Grades 7-9)
- It can be cramped in the Guild Hall (Grades 1-3)
- Our building’s quite old and quite dirty. And there’s no facilities to make a cup of coffee. But we are moving soon (Grades 1-3)
- We haven’t had anywhere people can go for lunch and get together that isn’t at their desks (Grades 7-9)
- There aren’t any restaurants. People do eat at their desks, but you’re told you’re not supposed to. It’s an issue everywhere in the Council, because accommodation is so expensive, there isn’t really the money there (Grades 4-6)
- When you eat at your desk, you never get a break. You still answer the phone (Grades 4-6)

Some explained that they are expected to share equipment such as telephones and computers.

- Sharing telephones is a disaster. Until last year we had to share our computer as well (Grades 7-9)

One person complains that his workspace does not provide him with enough privacy; he feels that other staff routinely overhear telephone conversations which contain information which should remain confidential.

- People [walking though our office] can hear names of people we’re talking about, and they shouldn’t do (Grades 4-6)

Some staff feel that their working conditions have remained the same, or worsened during the last twelve months. Those who will soon move to new offices feel that working conditions will continue to decline, as the City Council is reluctant to spend money on maintenance of the current ones.

- Working conditions have stayed the same (Grades 1-3)

- I can't, off the top of my head see what I would put in the credit column, for improving staff conditions and benefits and environment (Grades 7-9)
- Things [working conditions] have got a bit worse. Because we're moving to a new office soon, things that get broken are not getting fixed (Grades 1-3)".

## **UNISON SURVEY – MAY 2005**

### ***Do you have comments about facilities in the Guildhall?***

- Would be nice to have a larger staff room.
- Proper staff room would be nice, staff discount in places like Pret, Eat, M & S etc as there is no canteen.
- It would be nice to interact with others in a staff room where you can escape your office environment and don't feel obliged to go out for a break (lighter on purse too!)
- A staff canteen would be greatly appreciated!!!
- a small canteen would be great.
- If a rest room was available it might encourage me to move from my desk to take a lunch break.
- staff numbers warrant a canteen/ subsidised food/ rest areas etc.
- I would love to have a staff room.
- It would be practically useful to have some communal space to encourage co-operation & fraternisation.
- Could you re-introduce discounted trolley service.

## Appendix 2

### **1. Improvements carried out to office accommodation and facilities during the past five years (including works due to be carried out during 2006/07).**

#### **The Guildhall**

Alterations and improvements to third floor Central Services Offices - £27,500.

Alterations and improvements to E & P offices adjacent to TIC - £52,000.

Installation of cable management system for IT re-cabling and future electrical rewiring - £250,000.

Installation of secondary glazing - £8,000.

Replacement of old fluorescent light fittings with Category 2 fittings – GF, room 8, 4<sup>th</sup> floor, rooms 2 and 10 - £2,500.

Renewal of electrical service cables and distribution boards - £125,000.

Refurbishment of second floor kitchen facility - £3,500.

Replacement of all signage with Wayfinding system - £13,000.

Replacement of two passenger lifts - £142,000.

Replacement of generator powered emergency lighting with modern self maintaining fittings - £10,000.

Installation of audio conferencing equipment in Council Chamber - £26,500

Replacement of Committee room audio equipment - £4000

Ongoing decoration and carpet replacement in common parts.

Office rewiring – all floors - £50,000, funded from R&R

Replacement of corridor lighting – rolling programme - £10,800, funded from R & R

Replacement of fire alarm control panel and upgrade of break glass alarms and smoke detectors - £8,000 from R&R

Re-balancing Guildhall central heating system - £30,000 from R&R

#### **Hobson House**

Office, toilet and kitchen refurbishment to ground floor offices for Active Communities section - £4,200.

Refit first floor toilets - £5,000.

Replacement and repositioning of heating boiler in second floor offices - £3,000.

Ongoing decoration and carpet replacement in common parts.

Refurbishment of first floor kitchen - £3,000 from revenue budget

Complete replacement (including cabling) of fire alarm system -£25,000 from R&R  
(will be complete by end 2006)

### **Mandela House**

Reinforcement of electricity supply - £7,000.

Improvements to building access - £8,600.

Air conditioning installation in Llandaff Chambers accommodation - £8,000.

Ongoing decoration and carpet replacement in common parts.

New air conditioning units for Communications Room, ITNET - £7,000.

Replacement of windows to upper floors front elevation of Llandaff Chambers -  
£35,000 from R&R

Air conditioning installation –£35,000 Revenue services capital bid

### **Parson's Court**

Ongoing decoration and carpet replacement in common parts.

Improvements to second floor kitchen - £3,000 revenue budget and R&R

## **2. Office improvements which are planned for the next three-year period.**

### **The Guildhall**

Replacement of office lighting – rolling programme - £40,000. from R&R

### **Hobson House**

Replacement of office lighting - £16,000 from R&R

Upgrading emergency lighting system - £10,000 from R&R

### **Mandela House**

Replacement of office lighting - £15,000 from R&R

Upgrading emergency lighting system - £15,000 from R&R

**Parsons Court**

Replacement of office lighting - £3,000 from R&R

Replacement of emergency lighting - £500 from R&R



### **CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL PROPERTY & BUILDING SERVICES**

#### **Internal Standards of Heating, Lighting and Ventilation for Council Administrative Buildings**

In consultation with the Head of Architecture and Building Services, the Property Building Surveyor and the Management Health and Safety Adviser, the following criteria for acceptable working conditions in council administrative offices have been recommended. The criteria are based generally on standards set by Health and Safety in the Workplace legislation and The Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers.

However within these guidelines consideration has been given to the age and construction of the admin buildings and the Council's policy on energy consumption and sustainability. The effectiveness of heating, lighting and ventilation services will be impaired if there are changes in staff level, equipment, etc. without proper appraisal of the effect of the change on the internal conditions of the offices by the Building Services Engineers and the Building Surveyor.

#### **Temperature**

We would aim to keep office temperatures between 19 - 21 degrees C during the winter months. This temperature range will hopefully be achieved within the first hour of commencing work (i.e. normally between 8 - 9 am) and be maintained at that level until 6 pm, although the legal requirement is 16 °C.

Overheating in offices can be attributed to several factors, high occupancy, solar gain, latent gains from office equipment (e.g. PC, printer, photocopiers, etc.).

Air cooling is not the sole solution to overheating problems, as this method of reducing the internal temperature is expensive to purchase and operate, can be detrimental to health due to the circulation of airborne contaminants and does not embrace the Council's sustainability policies and strategies for energy conservation and energy efficiency.

If air cooling is to be considered it will be as a final solution, following the installation of non-energy consuming components (eg. blinds, shade, reflective film, etc.) and the development of better ventilation (eg. operable windows, fresh air systems, extract systems, etc.).

Where office temperatures exceed 26 degrees C for a substantial part of the working week on a regular basis (i.e. 60%), consideration will be given to the installation of air cooling equipment where other methods of temperature

reduction such as air movement, solar reflective film or blinds have not totally achieved the desired results.

## **Ventilation**

Ventilation is a crucial element for the wellbeing of staff, as both heating and cooling of offices can be detrimental to health without adequate ventilation.

Subject to consideration of the number of persons occupying an office, and the type and amount of electrical equipment etc. in an office, a minimum fresh air requirement of 8 to 15 litres per person per second will be considered acceptable for normal office use, although an increased rate of air movement during the summer months will be encouraged to minimise the need for air cooling equipment.

## **Relative Humidity**

To provide human comfort and the preservation of furniture, plants etc. as well as preventing the build up of static electricity, a relative humidity level of 40-60% will be considered acceptable. Staff are to be encouraged in the use of plants, and having pots of fresh water next to radiators to improve the relative humidity within their office.

## **Lighting**

We would aim to keep office lighting levels between 300-500 lux, although the minimum lighting level of 200 lux, as recommended by the Health and Safety Executive lighting guide will need to be maintained for general illumination, particularly where task lighting (eg. desk lamps) are being used. Task lighting can be used, subject to them utilising an energy saving light source.

## **Spatial Requirements**

The amount of office space allowed per member of staff in calculating accommodation levels will depend on a number of factors, e.g. the amount of equipment used by the individual, the layout of the office in question, the type of work carried out etc.

The Approved Code of Practice for The Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations requires that at least 11 cubic metres (or 3.7square metres floor area) per person be allowed for space taken up by the workstation. Generally 6-8 square metres floor area per person should be allowed when including filing and circulation space and space for any equipment specific to the post e.g. drawing board, printer. Generally the spatial requirements of each post should be assessed individually bearing in mind the above criteria.

**Date: September 2004**