



APPENDIX TWO OBJECTIVES & PROTOCOLS

Approved by Chief Officer Group (5 March 2008)

Objectives

For the purposes of this document, transformation in local government can be translated into four key objectives:

- Improved relationships with the public
- Joint working with partner agencies
- Fiscal discipline in asset management
- Productivity gain

The Better WorkPlaces Programme must deliver a series of strategic outcomes and local solutions to address these objectives.

Introduction

This document sets out agreed assumptions and protocols for the Better WorkPlaces Programme, developed for the Better WorkPlaces Steering Group and Property Board, with contributions from across Kent County Council.

The current office portfolio is largely a legacy of piecemeal decisions. It comprises 23 offices under corporate management supporting 5600+ staff and with rental and running costs in excess of £8.4m. In addition there are 36 offices occupied and managed by service directorates.

Significant change drivers are increasingly redefining how and where KCC staff work. For example, the changes the *Gateway* initiative will bring about in respect of client contact will act as enablers for office transformation to take place in other areas of the business. Whilst not part of the immediate scope of this Programme, operational buildings across the organisation will provide positive solutions to local, location-critical needs. Mobile working at all levels, changes in ICT infrastructure and interface, and multi-sectoral/inter-disciplinary working, all have a significant part to play, within and beyond the office estate itself.

The vision for the office estate set out below is concerned with promoting a coherent pattern of accommodation which is fit for the future, and which allows scarce resources tied up as capital or revenue in buildings to be released for service delivery. To achieve such a transformation KCC needs to reduce overall floor-space by increasing the proportion of staff who work flexibly or from home. It will be possible in due course to set clear targets and baseline information to manage future demands.

Initially, these protocols will be implemented as and when office moves happen. When staff move into a new office environment, it is expected that they will work within the parameters set out below.

Assumptions

Work needs to proceed on the basis of some simple, overarching assumptions:

1. A Corporate Headquarters for KCC will be required, and this will continue to be based at Sessions House and Invicta House at County Hall in Maidstone, accommodating staff concerned with strategic management activities and/or close member contact.
2. A strong local presence is required to provide the community with access to a range of public services (for example, via *Gateway* and other local premises).
3. *Location critical* office operations (primarily those delivering or directly supporting front-line services or close client contact) should be located close to the communities they serve.
4. *Location neutral* office operations (support processes and those with no need for close community contact) should be located in such a way as to optimise efficiency, and where appropriate, contribute to regeneration goals.
5. There is a preference for a freehold rather than leasehold estate (the intention being to maximise the use of KCC's existing freehold properties whilst reducing leasehold revenue liabilities, notably expensive sites and inefficient small buildings).
6. All directorates will be prepared to make use of shared accommodation and KCC itself will be prepared to share with other public sector agencies.
7. Appropriate technological solutions are critical success factors, and must therefore be in place to support both the new office environment, and the flexible working around it.
8. There will be a growing use of flexible working arrangements for traditionally office based staff, allowing staff to work at different locations and at different times.
9. All directorates accept the need for a corporate approach which may in some cases require reasoned directive action to ensure that objectives are realised and implementation proceeds quickly. It is recognised that the programme will be taken forward to ensure the least possible disruption to the business.
10. Offices should be provided and managed on a full service basis, with a single unified facilities management operation to secure efficiencies of scale.
11. The transformation should secure financial savings (without detriment to services) through more effective management and use of space.
12. The most pragmatic way to achieve financial savings is to target the release of specific buildings in the existing portfolio and intensify use in retained buildings.

Implications of change

The magnitude of the change required by the above should not be underestimated. It is driven by the vision for future service delivery, will have considerable effect on staff, and requires investment in technology and training to make it happen. It represents a real change in organisational culture involving:

1. Redefinition of the way we work, with a greater separation of customer-facing activities from non-customer facing activities, coupled with aggregation and efficiencies in common support functions.
2. Reappraisal of our relationship with Kent residents, and between Members and officers to ensure greater discipline in terms of communication and collaboration to ensure effective flexible working.
3. Re-evaluation of our approach to resource management to ensure a closer integration of strategies for property, people and information.

For many staff, the workplace may no longer be a specific desk in a specific office between specified hours; rather it will be a known office base, an agreed team space and access to appropriate IT facilities to ensure effective working. Work is the activity not the place. It will be important to take environmental issues into account when developing the strategy.

Anticipated Benefits

The future office estate will provide benefits for staff and clients, as well as for services, and in terms of finance and property. The exact nature and quantity of these benefits may vary according to specific circumstances, but will include:

For Services	Premises fit for purpose in the 21 st Century Better situated accommodation Synergy with other organisations Flexibility to introduce new working practices
For Kent Residents	More convenient and varied access to services More welcoming environment
For Staff	Adoption of flexible working practices (with IT support) Improved working environment
For Property	Less property Modern, better maintained/managed, more sustainable More consistent approach between office environments Joint use of property Less constrained portfolio
For Finance	Potential receipts from disposals Lower operating costs Greater clarity in accounting for office space

Operating Protocols

1. All dedicated office buildings should be coherently procured and subsequently managed through a single unified structure (Property Group). No office space should be procured without the explicit authorisation of the Director of Property.
2. All office moves between buildings outside Corporate HQ should be agreed by the Better WorkPlaces Steering Group.
3. The cost of occupying space should be made clear to its occupants through a charging mechanism.
4. All office space will be open plan. (It is recognised that this may take time to achieve because of the constraints in the existing portfolio).
5. Individually occupied offices within buildings should be treated as an exception, and may only be allocated to members of COG and their immediate Strategic Management Teams. Wherever possible, Directors will be encouraged to share offices.
6. All designated meeting rooms within the office estate will be bookable through a single system, and those individual offices retained must be readily available for meetings when not in normal use.
7. A standard allocation not exceeding 6m² of floor-space per workstation will be adopted. Allocation of desk space per flexible worker will be on a ratio of 1 desk for 2 staff (approx 3m² per flexible worker).
8. Generic designation of staff according to flexible working categories (see Appendices) will be based on Managing Director decisions as to who can work more than 40% of their time away from their base (at meetings/visits).
9. An agreed allocation of team storage per work team, taking account of specific pressures, will be allocated once the detailed survey is completed.
10. Other storage needs for individual and teams should be catered for through dedicated archive areas, on site where practicable.
11. A standard allocation of 1 linear metres of personal storage space (the equivalent of a desk length shelf) per member of staff will be adopted. This is based on one pedestal per person which can be located under desk.
12. For reasons of cost efficiency, there will be no small office buildings (accommodating fewer than 100 people).

It is recognised that there will need to be a limited number of exceptions to some of these protocols. Where these arise, they will be assessed on the basis of business need, and the decision to deviate from the protocols will be made by the Better WorkPlaces Steering Group.