

EQIA Submission – ID Number

Section A

EQIA Title

Future Assets Programme_Office Strategy_Henwood_Ashford

Responsible Officer

Clare Jameson - DCED INF

Approved by (Note: approval of this EqIA must be completed within the EqIA App)

Rebecca Anderson - DCED INF

Type of Activity

Service Change

Service Change

Service Redesign

No

Project/Programme

Project/Programme

Commissioning/Procurement

No

Strategy/Policy

No

Details of other Service Activity

No

Accountability and Responsibility

Directorate

Strategic and Corporate Services

Responsible Service

Infrastructure – Business Information, Strategy & Assurance

Responsible Head of Service

Rebecca Anderson - DCED INF

Responsible Director

Rebecca Spore - DCED INF

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of the office is evolving. Following the implementation of a more flexible way of working since the COVID-19 pandemic, Kent County Council is now exploring the future of workspaces and how they can support these changing needs. As part of the Future Assets Programme a review of the office estate has been conducted to evaluate various options.

The key outcomes of the Future Asset Office strategy programme are:

- Delivery of a reduced carbon footprint (by at least 35%) before 2030
- A substantially smaller, but more effective and affordable operational estate which is aligned to our estate needs following the adoption of flexible working as set out in the People and Technology strategy
- An enhanced user experience
- The development of property and technology support models and operational policies

We have collaborated with specialists and services to understand the space requirements based on a flexible working model where no staff are expected to spend more than 50% of their working week in the office.

The Henwood site was underutilised and temporarily closed in February 2023 in order to achieve revenue savings. Staff were able to use the flexible working office estate instead of Henwood, with most using Kroner House as that is also located in Ashford. Due to operational needs a few specific highways teams, that need to be located by the highways depot during winter service, returned to use a specific part of the office building. It has now been decided that the office will be permanently closed and sold, and an additional facility added to the depot site for those staff who have to work at the depot. Staff will continue to work where they have for the past two years, during the temporary closure. Local changes at Kroner House will be made in Spring 2025 to accommodate staff needing to work in the Ashford locality.

The EQIA will be reviewed and updated throughout this process.

This proposal aligns with KCC's Asset Management Strategy 24-30.

Section B – Evidence

Do you have data related to the protected groups of the people impacted by this activity?

Yes

It is possible to get the data in a timely and cost effective way?

Yes

Is there national evidence/data that you can use?

No

Have you consulted with stakeholders?

Yes

Who have you involved, consulted and engaged with?

KCC senior managers, HR teams and Unison for the temporary closure.
Ongoing liaison with staff affected, partners and Union(s) to ensure appropriate feedback was fed into the decision for permanent closure.
There are 195 immediate staff affected plus any staff using office space in Ashford for flexible working.

Has there been a previous Equality Analysis (EQIA) in the last 3 years?

Yes

Do you have evidence that can help you understand the potential impact of your activity?

Yes

Section C – Impact

Who may be impacted by the activity?

Service Users/clients

No

Staff

Staff/Volunteers

Residents/Communities/Citizens

No

Are there any positive impacts for all or any of the protected groups as a result of the activity that you are doing?

Yes

Details of Positive Impacts

Design and space planning set up to meet diverse needs and access to public facing services.
Multi use rooms provide space for wellbeing or faith use may be designed in any adaptations.
Teams will be located alongside wider Highways teams and closer to HQ and more diverse facilities, with improved integration within wider Division.

Negative impacts and Mitigating Actions
19. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Age
Are there negative impacts for age?
No
Details of negative impacts for Age
Not Applicable
Mitigating Actions for Age
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Mitigating Actions – Age
Not Applicable
20. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Disability
Are there negative impacts for Disability?
Yes
Details of Negative Impacts for Disability
New modular on depot site will be 2 storey but will only have stairs to the first floor so will not be accessible.
Mitigating actions for Disability
Facilities provided on first floor will also be available on the ground floor (desks, meeting rooms and facilities)
Responsible Officer for Disability
Rebecca Spore
21. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Sex
Are there negative impacts for Sex
No
Details of negative impacts for Sex
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sex
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Sex
Not Applicable
22. Negative Impacts and Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Are there negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
No
Negative impacts for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Gender identity/transgender
Not Applicable
23. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Race
Are there negative impacts for Race
No
Negative impacts for Race
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Race
Not Applicable
24. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Are there negative impacts for Religion and belief

No
Negative impacts for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Religion and belief
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Religion and Belief
Not Applicable
25. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Are there negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
No
Negative impacts for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Sexual Orientation
Not Applicable
26. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Are there negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Yes
Negative impacts for Pregnancy and Maternity
Change of venue and parking for coming to the office may be more challenging if it involves more travelling during pregnancy.
Mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Flexible working is available for staff to maximise a variety of working arrangements/venues. Parking solutions are prepared and flexible if reasonable adjustments are required.
The impact of the greater distance to travel is somewhat mitigated by the availability of alternative office accommodation at Kroner House for those working in the Ashford locality.
The crossover with other protected characteristics, including caring responsibilities, needs considering the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.
Responsible Officer for mitigating actions for Pregnancy and Maternity
Rebecca Anderson
27. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Are there negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
No
Negative impacts for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Mitigating actions for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
Responsible Officer for Marriage and Civil Partnerships
Not Applicable
28. Negative impacts and Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Are there negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Yes
Negative impacts for Carer's responsibilities
Change of venue and parking for coming to the office may be more challenging on timing for those transporting children or needing to be available for caring activities.
Mitigating actions for Carer's responsibilities
Flexible working is available for staff to maximise a variety of working arrangements/venues.

Parking solutions are prepared and flexible to enable different times of arrival.

The impact of the greater distance to travel is somewhat mitigated by the availability of alternative office accommodation at Kroner House for those working in the Ashford locality.

The crossover with other protected characteristics, including pregnancy, needs considering as the impact on these protected characteristics combined would be greater.

Responsible Officer for Carer's responsibilities

Rebecca Spore