
SUBJECT:	Additional Interview Room
REPORT OF:	Officer Management Team - Director of Services Prepared by - Head of Environment

1. Purpose of Report

To consider whether one or more additional interview rooms should be constructed at Capswood.

2. Links to Council Policy Objectives

2.1 This matter contributes to the Council's aim to deliver value for money services that are driven by customer and community needs.

3. Background

3.1 There are currently two interview rooms in the reception area of Capswood2. These are used mainly by the Revenues & Benefits and Housing sections.

3.2 The number of interviews held by Revenues & Benefits has increased significantly. This is believed to be as a result of changes in the rules for housing benefit for those in housing association accommodation. It is proving very difficult to find time for all of the interviews using the two rooms currently available.

4. Proposal/Discussion

4.1 A preliminary investigation by officers confirmed that any additional interview room will need to be close to Reception. This will avoid having visitors entering the general office areas and will make it easier for the interviewer to seek assistance should the interview become difficult.

4.2 Professional advice was sought from an office design company and its recommendations form the basis of this report. Any new interview room will have to allow for comfortable wheelchair access and will also have to include two doors for safety reasons.

4.3 The designer's own preferred option is shown as Option A. This option will use part of the space currently occupied by the Revenues & Benefits

section. The advantage of this option is that it will be relatively cheap to construct and it will not diminish the space available in the Reception area. The disadvantage is that we will have to re-locate the Community Impact for Bucks team in order to keep the Revenues and Benefits section together in one area. The scope of works for this has a budget figure of £9,000 and a further £1,000 should be allowed for relocation expenses.

- 4.4 The second suggestion has been worked up as Option B which is attached. This option utilises the space at the end of the reception desk. The designer's budget estimate £15,000 and the scope of works is also attached. The advantage of this option is that no office space is used, however it will entail a considerable loss of space in reception.
- 4.5 Members may also wish to consider a third option which is to extend option A by having two interview rooms in the Revenues & Benefits area at an estimated cost of £20,000.
- 4.6 To accommodate Option A, Community Impact would have to be seated elsewhere at Capswood although in practice there are usually only two or three people at any one time. CAB have asked for additional space at Capswood which may clash with the need for an additional interview room.

5. Resources, Risks and other implications

- 5.1 The financial figures given are estimates and the actual cost may be greater.
- 5.2 Any proposed funding must come from revenue reserves.
- 5.3 The need for an additional room is based on the assumption that there will be a long term increase in the number of interviews needed rather than a short term spike.
- 5.4 There will be loss of space. Option A will require a new area for Community Impact, and officers are investigating this. Option B will significantly reduce the space available to reception staff.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Members of the Resources PAG are asked to recommend whether one or more additional interview rooms should be created at Capswood.
- 6.2 Members are also asked to recommend to Cabinet that up to £20,000 should be allocated from revenue reserves for the work.

6.3 This matter requires Cabinet approval.

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Background Papers:	None