

**Estates Strategy - Community Board Member Feedback**

**Representations and observations opportunities were made available to Members of the Community Boards affected by the emerging Estate Strategy proposals, with a final date for representations and observations being the 4<sup>th</sup> January 2023. The e mail was sent on the 23<sup>rd</sup> December including all the appendices to the report.**

**Feedback from Councillor Stuart Wilson**

Councillor Stuart Wilson felt that there should be a clear direction of travel in the strategy, highlighting the need for a central location alongside satellite offices or town centre presences, to support committee and other public meetings.

Consultation and engagement is required across Select Committees and Task and Finish groups to support the process of developing the strategy as the impact extends beyond the buildings locations.

**Feedback from Councillor Tony Green**

Councillor Tony Green supports the principle of the rationalisation of the estate with concerns around working arrangements for employees, recognising that not all employees have a suitable workspace at home and the need for collaboration.

Meeting space in Amersham and Wycombe will support future public meetings and provide a Council presence in towns.

In relation to the options for additional space in Aylesbury, current office space should be considered given the cost difference per square between Aylesbury and Wycombe.

An email was sent by Officers explaining that the strategy reflects the 2 day per week in the office that staff are asked to be in the office. The strategy also reflects those staff that want to be in the office 5 days per week either because of their home working environment is not suitable or for another reason. This is also comparable with other local authorities and supports recruitment and retention.

The differences between the cost per square foot is consistent across the estate, however the difference shown in the report between Wycombe and Aylesbury is due to the commercial arrangements in place in Wycombe which offset running costs.

**Feedback from Councillor Melanie R Smith**

Councillor Melanie R Smith has concerns over future plans of Wycombe Area Offices.

An email was sent by Officers explaining that the report does not propose disposal of Wycombe Offices but proposes a review of the office due to low occupancy at a later stage following work on Aylesbury and Amersham.

#### **Feedback from Councillor Darren Hayday**

Councillor Darren Hayday was concerned the report suggested that the Queen Victoria Road Offices would be closed.

An email was sent by Officers explaining that the report is only seeking to review the Queen Victoria Offices after the first phase of the Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken, with the first phase comprising Aylesbury and Amersham. Further that it remained the vision for a continued Local Council presence to be provided at Amersham and Wycombe but sized to suit Community, Member, Staff and operational need as part of the emerging strategy.

#### **Feedback from Councillor Julia Wassell**

Councillor Julia Wassell was concerned the report suggested that there would be digital exclusion, with residents not having access to online services or access to an office in High Wycombe. There is also concern that closing of Wycombe Old Library would cause uncertainty for Children's Services.

An email was sent by Officers explaining that the report is only seeking to review the Queen Victoria Offices after the first phase of the Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken and that it remains the vision for a continued Local Council presence to be provided at Amersham and Wycombe but sized to suit Community, Member, Staff and operational need.

The refurbishment of Wycombe Old Library was undertaken in a pre covid world. As the report confirms after many months of data capture it is significantly underused. There is an opportunity for a new tenant which will bring additional vibrancy to the town and will also enable better use of the main Council Offices.

#### **Feedback from Councillor Lesley Clarke**

Councillor Lesley Clarke observed that online services could mean digital exclusion of elderly residents and that a Council presence is required in Wycombe and Amersham to support residents to access required services.

An email was sent by Officers explaining that the report is only seeking to review the Queen Victoria Offices after the first phase of the Accommodation Strategy has been undertaken and that it remains the vision for a continued Local Council presence to be present at Amersham and Wycombe but sized to suit Community, Member, Staff and operational need.

**Feedback from Councillor Rachael Matthews**

Councillor Rachael Matthews confirmed she was in support of the proposals.

**Feedback from Councillor John Chilver**

Councillor John Chilver confirmed he was in support of the proposals.