

<b>Committee(s):</b> Civic Affairs Sub Committee - For decision	<b>Dated:</b> 13/07/2023
<b>Subject:</b> Member Workspace Arrangements (Mezzanine Floor)	<b>Public</b>
<b>Which outcomes in the City Corporation's Corporate Plan does this proposal aim to impact directly?</b>	1 – 4, 12
<b>Does this proposal require extra revenue and/or capital spending?</b>	<b>Y (depending on decision)</b>
<b>If so, how much?</b>	<b>TBC (funding decision to be taken at a later stage)</b>
<b>What is the source of Funding?</b>	<b>Sub-Committee Contingency Fund</b>
<b>Has this Funding Source been agreed with the Chamberlain's Department?</b>	<b>Y</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Deputy Town Clerk	<b>For Decision</b>
<b>Report author:</b> Greg Moore	

### Summary

At the May 2022 meeting of Civic Affairs Sub Committee, Members discussed the increasing demands placed upon senior chairs, reflecting that there was a growing commensurate need to have suitable resources and facilities available to them in support of their roles. In response to comments on the need for dedicated quiet space in which they could conduct their City Corporation business, the City Surveyor identified various options and the Sub-Committee was minded that space identified on the West Wing Mezzanine would be desirable as it became available, with office space to be made available for the agreed list of senior Chairs and the Deputy Chairman of Policy & Resources.

The Sub-Committee provided a particular steer towards including a "de minimis" cost option (£10k, with allocation made from the Sub-Committee's contingency provision), which also offered the quickest solution in terms of delivery and move into the existing space (floorplan attached, Appendix 1). Three offices were made immediately available in line with this request and have since been furnished and occupied by the Chairs of Finance and of Planning & Transportation, as well as the Deputy Chairman of Policy & Resources. In keeping with the Sub-Committee's instructions around costs, this has been achieved with expenditure to-date of £2,200, which was required for essential cabling works (which would likely have been required in any event).

The remaining space on the Mezzanine was occupied by the Innovation and Growth (IG) department, who have now completed their relocation to the Irish Chambers. This paper now seeks views as to how Members would wish to progress the utilisation of the remainder of the space on the Mezzanine.

In parallel to this, the Sub-Committee had also supported the provision of a parental / guardians' room, to support Members with caring responsibilities, on the Mezzanine. A budget was allocated and location identified; however, the City Surveyor has highlighted that costs have risen since the initial cost estimate was provided and Members' views are sought in respect of an alteration of scope or funding to accommodate delivery.

## **Recommendation(s)**

Members are asked to:

- Provide views as to how they wish to take forward the Mezzanine space for both Member workspace and Parental Room purposes;
- Agree to delegate authority to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, to consider cost breakdowns when available from the City Surveyor and to authorise such expenditure as required (from the Sub-Committee's contingency fund) to deliver Members' expectations for both the Parental Room and Member Workspace.

## **Main Report**

### **Background**

1. At the May 2022 meeting of Civic Affairs Sub Committee, Members discussed the increasing demands placed upon senior Chairs, reflecting that there was a growing need to have suitable resources and facilities available to them in support of their roles. In particular, the Sub-Committee agreed that additional resources (in the form of dedicated office space) should be made available to:-
  - The Chairman of the Finance Committee,
  - The Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee,
  - The Chairman of the Police Authority Board,
  - The Chairman of the Corporate Services Committee, and
  - The Deputy Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee.
2. The City Surveyor, having been asked to present options for available space, provided Members with a list of prospective areas. The Sub-Committee was mindful of the need to keep costs to a minimum and noted that the Mezzanine level option presented included several existing under-utilised offices. The Sub-Committee consequently identified this space as the preferred option and asked for the City Surveyor and Town Clerk to identify options for the use of this space, for further consideration. A "de minimis" cost option, with a budget of up to £10k, was subsequently agreed (set out at Appendix 1).
3. Whilst three offices on the west side of the floor were available immediately, it was noted that full use of the space for Members' offices would require the relocation of IG staff to be concluded. In the interim, these three offices were repurposed and allocated to the Chairs of Finance and Planning & Transportation, and the Deputy Chairman of Policy & Resources. Existing surplus furniture was utilised to furnish the rooms, in keeping with the directive to minimise expenditure, and a total of £2,200 was committed in order to undertake necessary cabling works to facilitate data connectivity.
4. Separately, as part of ongoing activity to ensure that the Guildhall Complex is a welcoming and accessible environment for prospective and current elected Members, the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee gave consideration to the creation of

a Parental / Guardian Room. This would be intended to act as a dedicated and private space in which to undertake relevant caring responsibilities, including feeding. A prospective location was identified from within the existing Member-allocated space within the West Wing which could be re-purposed at minimal cost, also on the Mezzanine floor, namely, an under-utilised Members' IT Room.

5. In support of this proposal, it was also intended to refurbish the nearby bathroom on the Mezzanine floor, which is in need of upgrade. This would provide facilities in support of the Parental / Guardian room (particularly hand-washing facilities).
6. The quote obtained at that point in time indicated that the two rooms could be repurposed at a total cost of £7,500, a sum which could be met via the Civic Affairs Sub-Committee's contingency fund.

### **Current Position**

7. Remaining IG staff on the Mezzanine have now completed their relocation to the Irish Chambers, freeing up the rest of the space identified in Appendix 1 for Members' utilisation as previously considered.
8. The Sub-Committee previously agreed that the two remaining offices should be made available to the Chairs of the Police Authority Board and the Corporate Services Sub-Committee. Work is, therefore, underway to identify appropriate equipment with which to make good and furnish these rooms so that they are available for the Chairs in question following the summer recess. Whilst all efforts will be made to utilise available equipment, it should be noted that the large dial-in screens for Teams meetings come with significant cost (c.£10k per unit) and so, if they cannot be provided by relevant service departments, separate consideration will need to be given as to whether these are affordable from within the contingency budget.
9. There is also a larger space in between these two offices, which is currently un-utilised and home to eight desks. Previous suggestions have been that this area might be used to provide additional hot-desk style working space for Members, with the small room on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor West Wing in turn then used to install soundproof booths, to provide Members with a private space from which to take confidential calls. Equally, the current space could be retained and the Mezzanine space used for these pods. Members are invited to consider how they would wish for this space to be taken forward. £7,800 remains available from within the £10,000 allocation made by your Sub-Committee.
10. For the sake of completeness, it should be noted that the remainder of the Mezzanine space to the north of the lift is occupied by staff from Guildhall Library, who still require access to Lift 24, the book lift and toilets (see floorplan, Appendix 1). Therefore, there is still some space-sharing of communal facilities with officers, albeit on a low level.
11. In respect of the Parental / Guardian Room and associated washroom facilities, at the time of approval by this Sub-Committee, the quote provided under the terms of the internal facilities management contract was estimated at £7,500, and such sum was approved by the Sub-Committee. However, a change of contractor

took place shortly after this and the quoted sum is now significantly higher, albeit there are elements which remain subject to negotiation and confirmation. It is anticipated that the revised cost is likely to be in the region of £9,000 - £12,000.

## **Options and Proposals**

### ***Member Workspace***

12. The open work space now available on the Mezzanine presents a number of options:-
  - a. Use as a hot-desking space for Chairs of committees
  - b. Use as a hot-desking space for Members more generally
  - c. The installation of soundproof booths for confidential calls and working
  - d. A combination of the above
13. Members may also have other suggestions for the space, which are welcomed.
14. A corollary consideration around the potential alternative use of the small meeting room on the West Wing 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, which currently provides a small private working space for Members, also potentially arises, depending on Members' views on the above.
15. The desks are already in-situ for hot-desking purposes and so this option can be provided at minimal cost. The installation of soundproof booths would be subject to a confirmed quote but is anticipated to be in the region of £4,000 per booth. The space available on the Mezzanine could be used solely to provide space for booths, or a combination of booths with some desks retained; alternatively, booths could be installed in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor space, reserving the Mezzanine space for desk space.

### ***Parental / Guardian Room***

16. With the costs now coming in higher than anticipated, two options present themselves:-
  - a. Re-visit the scope of the project in order to deliver within the same budget envelope. Practically, this is likely to mean a limited update of the washroom facilities, which are somewhat outdated; Members will recall that the upgrade of the proximate washroom was identified as an important factor in making the offering a functional and welcoming one, given the Parental Room itself lacks running water.
  - b. Allocate additional budget in order to meet the funding shortfall. Whilst sufficient funding exists within the sub-committee's broader contingency fund, expenditure would clearly have an impact on the ability to respond to other funding requests for the remainder of the year.
17. In either event, further activity is required in order to ascertain precisely what is achievable within updated cost parameters. Unless Members are minded to make a direct determination now, it is, therefore, proposed that the City Surveyor be instructed to provide a cost breakdown of the project in order to inform a decision around delivery within refined scope or the allocation of additional funds to deliver a suitable offering. This could be circulated to the Sub-Committee by

email and views sought, with authority delegated to the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair, to give effect to the view of Members and provide for the works to be undertaken over the summer recess.

### **Corporate & Strategic Implications**

- **Strategic implications** – Provision of this office space to meet the increasing demands placed upon senior chairs aligns with the Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy 2020/25 through better utilisation to ensure a more efficient, effective and sustainable asset base.
- **Financial implications** – The Civic Affairs Sub-Committee has a budget allocation of £60k available to it for contingency purposes, to resource projects or initiatives within its remit. £10k has been allocated from this budget for Member Workspace costs, together with £7.5k for the Parental / Guardian Room. Commitments totalling £43.5k from this fund have been made to date; there remains therefore a £16.5k uncommitted balance.
- **Equalities implications** – The proposals for a dedicated space for parental / guardian responsibilities supports the City Corporation's offering to elected Members in respect of pregnancy and maternity provision.
- **Security implications** – None.
- **Risk implications** – None.

### **Conclusion**

18. To meet the increasing demands placed upon senior chairs and Members more broadly, as well as to make the Corporation a more welcoming and inclusive space for those with parental or caring responsibilities, options have been progressed for provision of improved Members facilities to the West Wing Mezzanine space. Members are now invited to consider how they wish to progress further improvements to the spaces available, in order to best meet those needs.

### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 – Mezzanine West Wing Floorplan