

Agenda item: 

**Decision maker:** Cabinet Member for Resources

**Subject:** Disposal of Merefield House, Relocation of Children's Social Care (CSC) to Civic Offices & Refurbishment of Ground Floor Reception Facilities

**Date of Decision:** 29 September 2011

**Report by:** Asset Management Service

**Wards affected:** All

**Key decision (over £250k):** No

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**1. Purpose of report**

To provide an update on the project to relocate Children's Social Care (CSC) from Merefield House to the Civic Offices.

**2. Recommendations**

The Cabinet Member for Resources notes that this project is on schedule, within budget and on track to achieve its key objectives.

**3. Background**

The disposal of Merefield House, CSC client access and office accommodation was agreed by Formal Cabinet in 2010. The decision endorsed the relocation of the Service to Civic Offices. Capital funding was agreed April 2011, in order to facilitate the disposal of the site and relocate the Service.

Initial project objectives

- Relocate CSC client access and office accommodation for 135 staff.
- Refurbishment of the Ground Floor Civic Offices to facilitate CSC client access requirements.
- Re-engineer the customer processes of front and back office functions as part of the Transformation agenda for: Revenues & Benefits, Licensing, Land Charges, Cash Office whilst incorporating the needs of CSC.
- Improve utilisation of the Civic Offices by introducing new accommodation standards to reduce the number of cubical offices, the space allocated per workstation and to develop generic office layouts to increase occupancy.

### Enhancement to the Initial Project Objectives

Analysis identified the potential to consolidate Services further. These opportunities were determined to be achievable within the project funding allocated and consistent with the initial objectives:

- Relocation of a Finance Team together with two CSC Teams from Chaucer House to Civic Offices (70 staff/62 workstations).
- Relocation of a further CSC Team from Medina House to Civic Offices (15 staff).

### Timeline

Relocation of CSC is scheduled for April 2012. Ground floor refurbishment requirements necessary for the CSC relocation will be completed pre-April 2012 with the whole scheme delivered by early July 2012.

### Objectives Achieved to Date

- Relocation of Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) to Civic Offices July 2011.
- Relocation of numerous Education Teams from Dame Judith Professional Centre (DJPC) July 2011. Marketing of DJPC site for disposal.
- Relocations within Civic – Culture, Adult Social Care, numerous Education Teams and Finance Team.
- Removal of cellular offices: 13
- Increased occupancy: 91 staff/81 workstations
- Wherever possible all surplus furniture and equipment is being re-used within PCC sites. In particular, a vast proportion of office and meeting room furniture will be used across the scheme.
- Initiation of a further review of the Medina House for asset disposal.
- The project is forecast to be delivered within the budget allocated.

#### **4. Reasons for recommendations**

To provide members with assurance that the project objectives will be achieved.

#### **5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)**

The AMS EIAs for Acquisition and Disposal of Land and Property and Civic Offices Ground Floor Refurbishment Project are on the PCC website. These plans will be made available to the public via the PCC website, with copies in alternative formats (e.g., audio, Braille) available on request.

#### **6. Head of legal services' comments**

Should there be any actions arising from the plan which requires a legal input, the author is expected to raise the issue directly with the legal section.

**7. Head of finance's comments**

The approved capital budget for the closure of Merefield House and relocation of staff to the Civic Offices is a sum of £616,000, this included budget provision for certain items that may not be required, for example replacement furniture and floor coverings. For this reason, it has been possible to broaden the scope of this project without the need to increase the existing budget provision. The Project Board is confident that the enhanced scheme can be delivered and costs contained within the approved budget.

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 Signed by:

**Appendices:**

**Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972**

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by ..... on .....

.....  
 Signed by: