Walsall Council

Accommodation Policy

Date	
Owner	
Effective from	
Review date	

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1.0   Introduction

The Accommodation Policy (The policy) is fundamental to the council's Strategic Asset Plan (SAP) and aims to ensure that the council achieves the most efficient estate possible whilst ensuring that accommodation is appropriate to meet the needs of all staff, elected members and visitors and is designed to ensure that space is allocated according to need.

Responsibility for space provision, allocation and maintenance lies with the Corporate Landlord Service (CLS)

Where Service Directorates require additional operational property, for the expansion of operational activities or new operational activities, the acquisition or allocation of additional space will be managed by CLS. Details of the process for taking additional floor space, whether in council-owned or third party owned property are contained within this policy.

The policy has been developed to provide a clear framework for decision making around utilisation of the council's estate and incorporates best practice and space standards recommended by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and Building Regulations where applicable and outlines the terms of use and standards of occupancy.

The diagram below demonstrates how the policy sits within the SAP supporting documents which in turn supports the aims of Our Council Plan 2022- 2025

Figure 1- Strategic Asset Plan content

2.0   Purpose

The aim of the policy is to provide a method of managing space within the council's estate, locating and re-allocating space between departments and services to make maximum use of all available options. It will also enable the council to use space more effectively and reduce the size of the estate where possible. This will allow for the older, less efficient buildings to be vacated and disposed of in accordance with the SAP, and in line with the five Asset Management Policy objectives.

The main objective of the policy is to provide a framework for the management of all accommodation and accommodation combined with service user provision to ensure the available space is fit-for-purpose, of a consistent corporate style and complies with statutory and non-statutory recommended standards. The policy supports the principles contained in SAP and is intended to challenge and support innovation and new ways of working.

3.0   Scope

This policy applies to all members of staff and elected members located at any of the council's buildings.

Every employee and elected member of the council has an obligation to ensure that all available resources are used effectively, and this principle applies equally to the use of accommodation.

All service users will be provided with 'fit for purpose' accommodation of a suitable standard to meet the needs of the service.

To comply with this policy, all staff and members must be aware of the levels of responsibility and the governance process which exist to ensure that all matters of accommodation allocation and standards are dealt with efficiently and effectively.

4.0   Ownership and Responsibilities

4.1   Corporate Landlord Service

Building ownership, occupancy and overall CLS responsibilities are outlined within the **SAP Appendix 5 Responsibilities Document**

4.1.1   Property Manager

To manage the Council's property portfolio and be an advisor to Strategic Investment Board and a member of Asset Strategy Group, Corporate Asset Review Group, Corporate Landlord Board and Directorate Asset Review Groups.

4.1.2   Space Manager

- Reports to the Property Manager.
- To act as business partner in all matters of corporate space allocation

- Procurement and supply of office furniture, corporate removals, space booking tools and   access control.
- Implementation and management of this policy and member of Corporate Landlord Board, Corporate Asset Review Group and Ways of Working Office Group
- Responsible for compliance with HSE accommodation standards.
- Maintain records of current allocation of space and deal appropriately with change requests in accordance with governance requirements.
- Work with services and directorates to facilitate moves as required and approved.
- Responsible for the utilisation tools and surveys and reporting appropriately as required. To regularly review to optimise the estate and reduce costs where appropriate in line with the principles of occupation outlined in this policy.
- Project management of accommodation change processes from requirements capture and to the co -ordination of associated works
- Develop an outline brief for with service directorates and work on appropriate level business case prior to approval where appropriate.
- Prepares detailed brief in line with the approved business case and passes to the CLS team responsible for delivery.

4.1.3   Facilities Management

- Work undertaken to ensure acceptable standards are maintained within the accommodation such as cleaning and caretaking services, security internal redecoration and renewal of floor finishes within communal areas

- Provision of consumables such as liquid soap, toilet rolls and dishwashing liquid and sanitary bins

- Waste management and confidential waste disposal in line with our corporate service level. Waste, recycling and confidential waste bins will be provided in communal spaces only

- Ensure that there are appropriate risk assessments in place and that there are regular health and safety inspections carried out by a suitably qualified person.

- Produce accommodation management procedures and documentation for safe working practices including visitors and contractors on site.

- Out of Hours callout security provision

4.1.4   Corporate Management

Corporate statutory compliance contracts managed by CLS
- Asbestos Management
- Legionella Management (water systems)
- Access Audits
- Energy Efficiency
- Lifts

- PAT and fixed wire electrical testing
- Gas Safety
- Emergency lighting
- Alarms
- Fire safety

4.2 Building Managers

For each building, there is a nominated Head of Service from the lead service in occupation of the building. The Head of Service is the primary contact for CLS and is the responsible person for ensuring that periodic statutory compliance processes are followed, and the requirements of this policy are fully adopted by staff and site users. A schedule of nominated Heads of Service is maintained by CLS. Responsible managers based on site will be required to raise any issues arising with Facilities Management through 'report a problem' online service desk in addition to: -

- Arranging weekly water system flushing for legionella prevention,
- Adherence to the fire evacuation process
  - o weekly fire alarm tests
  - o check all fire doors open freely and escape routes are clear of furniture
  - o rubbish and trip hazards.
  - o There are trained fire marshalls on site
- Monitor contractors (sign in via contractor registration forms)
- keep the site log book up to date.
- Ensure availability of first aiders on site

Under no circumstances should any changes be made to the building fabric, room layouts or occupancy without following the CLS 'Process for Change'

4.3 All Staff

All staff have a responsibility to treat all council property with respect, report issues as they arise and abide by the contents of this policy.

4.4 Non-council employees and site users

Will ultimately be the responsibility of the requesting service outside of a formal lease agreement. Where a building or part thereof is to be occupied by non-council staff, partners, contractors or volunteer agencies then advice should be sought from CLS to ensure appropriate permissions are granted and terms of occupancy agreed. Although this will not be considered unless space is available.

4.5 Occupying Services

Under no circumstances should any changes be made to the building or its services. Any requirements for such changes should be referred to CLS with the appropriate business case

4.6 Digital and Transformation Service (DaTs)

Digital and Transformation Service colleagues will be responsible for the provision of IT networks and desktop equipment within council accommodation

5.0 Standards and Practice

5.1 Proud *Everywhere* and Presence with a Purpose Principles

Proud*Everywhere* is a vision to create a workplace culture where colleagues make use of a variety of locations and technological tools to help them deliver their job roles, and benefit themselves, our service users and the council.

This new way of working gives Walsall Council employees both trust and accountability to deliver their roles; empowering them to choose how, where and when they undertake their tasks to complete their objectives and serve their customers in the most effective way.

This can be achieved by improving the virtual and physical workplace experience, by developing workspaces to provide greater flexibility to meet an evolving need for an adaptable and agile working culture and environment.

By adopting these principles in addition to continually monitoring space requirements tour organisation will be able to achieve the most efficient estate possible.

Figure 2 Presence with a Purpose Principles

Proud *Everywhere* and Presence with a Purpose Principles support the Ways of Working policy.

5. 2   Accommodation

5.2.1 Service Standard

- CLS aims to meet statutory and professional requirements and guidelines on accommodation for all staff, members and council services.

- Space or accommodation is not owned by specific departments or services. It is council property, managed by the Corporate Landlord Service, and all staff and members must be prepared to relocate if it is judged to be of benefit to the organisation

- The standard offer for office accommodation will be open plan with a range of bookable fully equipped workspaces to support quiet working and team working supported by collaboration spaces, rooms for private meetings, business centres and welfare spaces.

- Staff will be required to use the corporate booking system for an allocated workspace

- Some larger teams with specific requirements may be offered a dedicated space in which to manage their own teams outside of the corporate workspace booking system. Each arrangement of this type will be periodically reviewed to ensure the space offered is appropriate.

- All workstations are subject to the Clear Desk Policy and must be left clean and tidy after every use in readiness for the following user. CLS reserves the right to remove and dispose of any residual items remaining at the end of each business day.

A standard workstation will include:
- Desk
- Ergonomic adjustable chair
- Docking station and 23" monitor on adjustable arm or Wyse 2 in 1 unit
- Keyboard
- Mouse

Under no circumstances should any equipment be removed from any workstation whether bookable or permanently allocated and at any site within the organisation. Issues should be reported appropriately to
- Issues with IT equipment to DaTS through their intranet 'point of business' portal
- Furniture- desks, chairs and monitor arms to CLS via officemoves@walsall.gov.uk

Where there is office accommodation combined with service user engagement, the site will be developed or lead by the specific needs of the service and service user in line with the Customer Strategy

Individual offices will only be allocated on the requirements of the post and subject to consultation with the relevant Executive Director and Corporate Management Team (CMT) approval other than for existing agreed arrangements.

5.2.2 Health and Safety

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ensures that all employers provide a safe working environment for staff.
CLS adheres to the minimum standards of Regulation 10 of the Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992 with regards to room dimensions and space requirements. To support our adherence to these regulations under no circumstances should furniture be moved or room layouts changed.

The authority's safety management standards on all other aspects of workplace safety and wellbeing can be found at
http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Human_Resources/Health_and_Safety_Manual/Safety_management_standards_SMS

First Aid
Arrangements for first aid fall within the building manager role. In cases of low-risk buildings, there is a requirement for 1 first aider per 100 occupants, and so, for most of the buildings, there is only a requirement for a nominated person who is the liaison where emergency services are required. Within the Civic Centre complex, there are trained first aiders within the curatorial team, and HR maintains an up-to-date list of trained first aiders.

Fire procedures
Each property has a fire evacuation process which is audited by the Health and Safety team and is maintained by the relevant building manager

5.2.3 Opening Hours

Opening hours are site specific according to service need within reason and in line with optimising building efficiency and safety.

Site	opening	closing	
Civic centre	7:30 am	7 pm	
Council house	7:30 am	Variable	dependent upon the Council and statutory evening meeting schedule which is supported by the curatorial staff.
All other sites supported by caretaking staff	7:30 am	6 pm	Alternative arrangements can be sourced and supported by CLS at the expense of the occupying service.
Public access buildings			Local arrangements in place- varying published opening hours to satisfy individual site requirements

Some support service staff and services may have different local arrangements

5.2.4 Booking Space

There is a corporate booking system for meeting room and workspace booking provision.

Teams who have shared allocated workspaces do not need to use the booking system, however all other staff do need to book a space. This will help us to be more informed about the capacity and overall use of our spaces

All meeting rooms need to be booked to ensure availability.

Some collaboration spaces need to be booked but others are available for ad hoc use, such as meeting pods and smaller informal groupings of tables and chairs

5.3 Meeting Rooms

All meeting rooms within council properties are considered a shared resource unless agreed by the CLS following submission of a business case.

Each meeting space will contain a display of the default room layout including maximum occupancy. Default layout should be reinstated by users at the end of each booking.

Meeting room bookings are largely self-service, however there may be time when priority needs to be given to specific services or functions in order to fulfil statutory obligation.

Meeting room provision will require periodic review by CLS in order to check demand is being consistently met. To maximise efficiency services are encouraged to only book space relevant to the size, number of delegates and type of meeting planned unless there is no alternative.

Hybrid meeting technology through MS teams will be installed within a variety of different meeting spaces to further improve efficiency and collaboration through Presence with a Purpose Principles particularly when collaborating with external agencies. Details will be within the booking process

5.4 Furniture

Allocation of space and furniture purchase and installation is managed by the CLS to provide a consistent corporate 'look and feel' throughout the estate. Proud *Everywhere* and Presence with a Purpose Principles are bringing a new look and feel to our spaces. Furniture will be provided to encourage open collaboration as well as quiet zones for more focused work

Worn out or damaged furniture will be replaced through CLS at the expense of the occupying service as outlined in the SAP Appendix 5 Responsibilities document.

Furniture is specifically laid out to conform with Health and Safety requirements. Services must not alter room layouts. Please contact CLS to make change requests through CLS 'Process for Change'

5.5 Reasonable Adjustments

CLS will work with managers to support reasonable adjustments where appropriate under the Ways of Working Policy

5.6 Storage

Storage will be allocated to appropriate to service requirements and will be robustly challenged for necessity and adherence to the Information Governance legal framework.

Storage of larger items within communal storage areas will be subject to storage space inventory, service responsibility and regular review by the CLS

Lockers will only be allocated to staff who attend the office two or more days a week unless there is a reasonable adjustment in place

5.7 Staff Welfare Spaces

5.7.1 Break out areas

Break out areas are available to enable all staff to move away from their working environment. At a minimum each area will contain a sink, refrigerator, microwave, water heater, waste bins and appropriate seating. There will be no individual refrigerators, toasters, coffee machines or kettles allowed within office spaces. Kettles will be replaced by fixed water heaters in all kitchens where it is feasible to do so.

Staff are required to leave break out areas clean and tidy and store crockery and cutlery in the cupboards provided. CLS reserves the right to dispose of any residual dirty unhygienic items littering the breakout areas.

Fridges will be fully emptied at the end of every week.

5.7.2 Welfare Rooms

Welfare rooms will follow to further supplement break out areas and will contain comfortable seating, washing facilities and a refrigerator and will provide private quiet   space for prayer or personal reflection, and facilities for nursing mothers and employee support.

5.8 Monitoring and Inspection

CLS has overall responsibility for ensuring that space is efficiently used and in line with the SAP 'Optimising Assets' theme.

The use. allocation and layout of accommodation is recorded in Computer Assisted Drawings (CAD) files. The drawings are updated every time a move occurs or allocation changes. Each location is inspected at least annually to ensure that drawings are accurate.

To ensure that space is being used efficiently a full utilisation study is conducted in conjunction with access control data on a regular basis to record occupancy and

how space is being used. The results of this study will be reported to CMT on a regular basis.

5.9   ID and Access Control

All staff are required to have an ID card supported by access control appropriate to the needs of their role and access requirements.

Access Control is managed centrally by CLS and is critical to the safety of our staff and operational functions.

Issuing of new and replacement identity and access control cards will be undertaken by the Admin and Business and Support function . Further information on the process can be found at http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/ID_and_Access_Control and contact is via AccessControlID@walsall.gov.uk

6.0   Process for Change

All requests for space, changes of use, bids for, or requests for additional space by departments, whether they involve building alterations or not, will be managed under this policy and subject to approval.

CLS has overall responsibility for the optimisation of space and will ensure that all allocations are based on need and corporate objectives

6.1 Business Case

All applications for change need to be submitted by completion of a Relocation or Change request form (Appendix A). The form needs to be signed off by the relevant service director or executive director and submitted to CLS Space Manager via OfficeMOves@walsall.gov.uk for attention in the first instance.

The application document will be reviewed to ascertain the most appropriate path within the approval process which will differ dependent on the size, scale and impact of the change. The outline brief will then be developed further with the requesting service and passed through the relevant approval process.
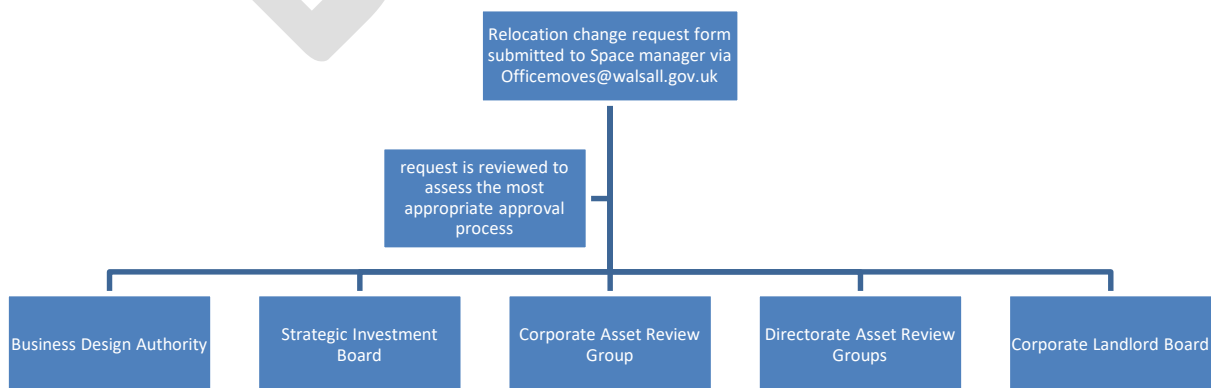

Figure 3 'process for change' approval considerations

6.2 Business Design Authority (BDA)

BDA needs to be consulted when there is a change to an existing business process which may have wider implications on other services or service users. Depending on the requirement it may be appropriate to approach BDA prior to submitting an initial request to CLS.

6.3 Strategic Investment Board (SIB)

SIB approval may be required subject to estimated costs.

SIB will deliver against its terms of reference in supporting the identification of priorities across the council for capital programme funding which is aligned to the delivery of corporate priorities, aims and outcomes. Approvals are achieved through joint agreement of directorate priorities and associated pipeline ranking against funding available or anticipated.

6.4 Corporate Asset Review Group (CARG)

Corporate Asset Review Group is the forum which brings together the property champions for each directorate and the Corporate Landlord. This group allows cross directorate property related matters to be discussed.

6.5 Directorate Asset Review Groups

Each directorate has a Directorate Asset Review Group which is the forum for discussion about the directorate's property requirements for efficient service delivery. All service delivery property requirements and issues should be raised with Corporate Landlord through these groups.

6.6 Corporate Landlord Board (CLB)

Corporate Landlord Board is responsible for ensuring the effective performance of the Corporate Landlord function and the delivery of the aims and objectives of the Strategic Asset Plan. CLB will monitor progress of the Asset Management Action plan (AMAP) and agree the annual review of the AMAP. CLB reports directly to SIB on matters relating to the council's property portfolio.

Strategies, policies and associated documents

Our Council Plan 2022-2025

Customer Strategy

SAP and appendices link to report where approved

Proud Everywhere presentation

Ways of Working Policy

Code of Conduct for Employees

Behaviour and Standards framework

http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/ID_and_Access_Control

Contacts

CLS@walsall.gov.uk

AccesscontrolID@walsall.gov.uk

officemoves@Walsall.gov.uk

Health and Safety Executive – How much space am I entitled to at work?

https://www.hse.gov.uk/contact/faqs/roomspace.htm

Appendices

Appendix A

Relocation or Change request form

APPENDIX 1

BUSINESS CASE to support Relocation or Accommodation Change request			
Directorate		**Service**	
Requesting Head of Service		**Contact Officer**	
Current Location:		**Date**	
Business Case (to be completed by requesting Head of Service)			
Please provide an overview of your requirements			

How have you, the team or individual staff member been working since March 2020?

Now taking into account our blended working principles below – on what basis would you need regular access to council workspaces?

A professional requirement for supervision

Peer support, challenge and wellbeing support, in carrying out duties to support and safeguard adults and children.

Collaborating and Problem solving

Creative, innovative working sessions – where space, facilities, ideas generation, bouncing off others is essential.

Administration

Access to specific hard copy records, dealing with post, scanning, creating signs when unable to use a digital solution.

Induction and Introductory meetings

Meeting people for the first time.

Team Building

Bringing everyone together in one place, to build and ensure team engagement.

Connectivity

Ensuring all employees have connectivity to the system, for example when individuals have poor or limited connectivity at home, or increased processing capability is needed, e.g. waste unitary charge processing.

Wellbeing

To support the mental, social and physical wellbeing of an employee, when there is a specific concern or support required for a period of time.

Meetings where body language is important

For example negotiations, performance management, dealing with difficult situations / matters.

Professional Development

Training and workshops which require face to face facilitation.

Event management

Coming together around a specific event, access to information, quick decisions, checking on wellbeing, e.g. flood control room.

More specific detail regarding team equipment, working hours of individuals etc. will need to be submitted on an accompanying data collection spreadsheet following approval	What you have now	What you require
Number of staff to be accommodated		
Storage requirements		
Close proximity to other teams or services		
Number of working days per week		
Comments		

Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requirements:

Please state whether there are any reasonable adjustments to be considered and provide separately any current risk assessments and Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans in place for staff members.

Please also complete an Equality Impact Assessment Equality Impact Assessment

Cost implications - Capital and Revenue:

Please note that furniture, fixtures, fittings, ICT and out of hours costs for power and network installations will be charged to the service. Additionally there may be a lead in time for goods or services of up to 4 weeks or more.

Please provide your oracle code below.

Oracle code:

Executive Director

Print name	Signature

Office use only	
Request Approved by Corporate Landlord Yes/ No	If 'no' please state why
Approver	
Signed	
Date	