

Call-in Office Accommodation Review
by the Liberal Democrats
Cabinet Report Agenda item 14 on 8th June 2011

We the undersigned wish to call-in the decision of cabinet (8th June) in relation to agenda item 14 – the office accommodation review.

The decision failed to meet the principles of decision making as outlined in the council's constitution, Article 13.02.

13.02 Principles of Decision Making

All decisions of the Council (whether they are the responsibility of the Cabinet or not) will be made in accordance with the following Principles

- Proportionality (i.e. the action should be proportionate to the desired outcome);
- Due consideration of professional advice from officers;
- Respect for human rights;
- Presumption in favour of openness; and
- Clarity of aims and desired outcomes

The reasons for the call-in are as follows

Due consideration of professional advice from officers

Cabinet failed to consider the “soft” market testing of the North Warehouse as outlined in the cabinet decision on the 8th of December, on potential tenants of the North Warehouse, their particular needs and whether these needs could be met by letting accommodation on the 1st floor and above of Herbert Warehouse.

Cabinet has failed to properly consider the future accommodation needs to carry out the civic functions of the council. It has not consulted all councillors. The proposed new council chamber on the ground floor of Herbert Warehouse is not fit for purpose.

Respect for human rights

Cabinet has failed to consider the future accommodation needs of its staff at Herbert, Kimberley and Phillpotts, or provided any evidence of adequate consultation with staff prior to the decision to sell-off (put on the market) the North Warehouse.

Cabinet has not consulted members of the public, councillors and community groups who currently use the meeting rooms at the North Warehouse.

Cabinet has not considered the implications of inadequate car parking provision for the public, councillors and staff attending meetings. It has failed to address the implications for lone women of having to walk a distance to their car when leaving meetings late at night, particularly in the winter when it is dark.

Presumption in favour of openness

Cabinet has not discussed in public the key fundamentals of the proposed move out of the North Warehouse and has excluded the press and public from its discussion and decision making.

A two part report could have been provided - one for public consultation and one for confidential information.

Clarity of aims and desired outcomes

The proposed marketing of the North Warehouse is unclear. A draft marketing leaflet says the North Warehouse could become a hotel and restaurant, but this is not referred to in the cabinet report.

Call-in supported by

Cllr. Jeremy Hilton

Cllr. Sebastian Field

Cllr. Anna Mozol

Cllr. David Brown

Cllr. Declan Wilson

Cllr. Phil McLellan