

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO THE CABINET MEETING OF 5 OCTOBER 2020

PUBLIC REPORT: Y

EXEMPT: N

Report Title	Modifications to the Harborough Innovation Centre Lettings Strategy
KEY DECISION	No
Report Author	Tim Bradbury – Harborough Innovation Centre Manager
Purpose of Report	To detail the changes made and consider implementing into the revised paper.
Reason for Decision	To ensure the HIC Lettings Strategy more reflects the centre objectives of supporting growing businesses.
Portfolio Holder	Councillor J Hallam
Corporate Priorities	The Place: CO1, CO2 The People: CO6, CO7
Financial Implications	Potential longer-term income stability for the HIC and Grown on Centre
Risk Management Implications	To mitigate loss of businesses tenancy; reducing risk of losing businesses from the HIC and Harborough district by providing business spaces to grow into for growing businesses longer term.
Environmental Implications	None as far as this report is concerned.
Legal Implications	As set out in the body of this report.
Equality Implications	None as far as this report is concerned.
Data Protection Implications	None as far as this report is concerned.
Consultation	Internal consultation with the portfolio holder.
Options	Option 1 – Agree to the modifications as set out in the body of this report; or Option 2 –Revert to the pre-existing position.
Background Papers	N/A
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the lengths of the terms of occupation at the HIC, as set out in the HIC Lettings Strategy document, are modified to enable them to be more flexible and supportive of growing businesses and to enable businesses to grow at their own pace. 2. That the HIC meeting rooms policy in the HIC Lettings Strategy document be modified to enable Covid - 19 compliant reductions in

1. Introduction

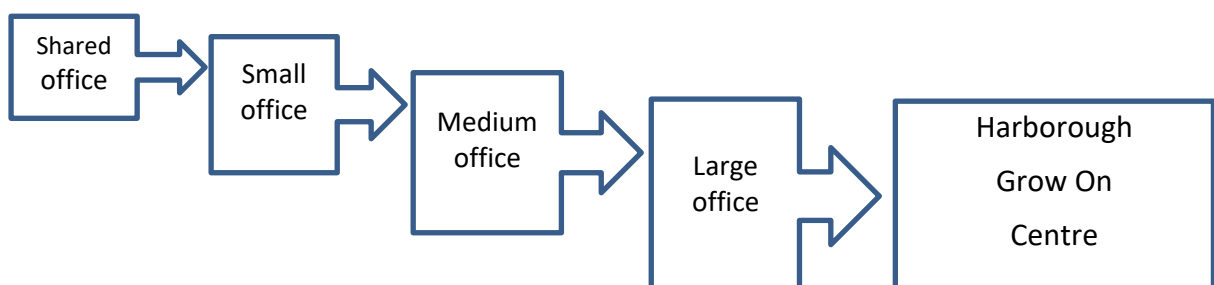
- 1.1 HDC provides an environment where new & growing entrepreneurial & innovative businesses can thrive, supported by high quality workspaces and associated business support, to provide jobs and economic growth for Harborough District.
- 1.2 The provision of suitable office accommodation for new and growing businesses is a key component of the wider economic development of the district. It is essential the Harborough Innovation Centre (HIC) and the Harborough Grow-On Centre (HGC) work in tandem to create a dynamic and innovative business community at each location and a business growth pathway between the two.
- 1.3 The permitted length of occupation for a new tenant at the HIC has historically been set at 3 years with a possible additional 2 years in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the council.
- 1.4 The time it can take for a business to be successful and grow, particularly from start-up, is not the same for all businesses and the Council recognise this.
- 1.5 It is proposed the length of occupation time limit at the HIC be removed to facilitate businesses to grow into larger premises within the HIC and then potentially onto the HGC. This ensures businesses remain within the district creating employment and wealth for the local community.
- 1.6 Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the capacity of meeting rooms has been reduced considerably to enable safe working and social distancing. A statement to this effect has been added to the Lettings Strategy under room hire.
- 1.7 Both recommendations of this report have been presented to and gained written approval from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) to ensure the two changes recommended are acceptable within the terms of the HIC funding agreement as they do not constitute material changes to the approved use.
- 1.8 To ensure the HIC remains flexible and supports new and growing businesses for the longer term, two recommendations are before Cabinet.

2. Key Facts

Recommended Length of Occupation (within the HIC Lettings Strategy)

- 2.1 The length of occupation and progression through the HIC is expected to fluctuate dependent on the speed of growth of a business. The performance of each business will be reviewed on an annual basis as part of the licence renewal process to ensure they continue to meet the eligibility criteria. This will allow businesses to grow within the HIC and keep much needed employment within the district. Annual licences will be granted and subject to renewal by agreement, at the Council's absolute discretion.

A natural progression for a business within the HIC could be:



Recommended statement to be added to the Room Hire section (within the HIC Lettings Strategy) of the HIC Lettings Strategy

- 2.2 Where circumstances and/or Government guidance require meeting rooms to be configured in certain ways, possibly with reduced capacity, it is recommended that cabinet approve that meetings rooms can be modified to amend their capacity in order to meet up to date Government guidance. This measure would be kept under review and given effect to by the HIC Manager as necessary and appropriate.