

Freedom of Information Request – Response - 27471

This request concerns any proposals, works, purchases or arrangements relating to the accommodation, relocation, refurbishment, furnishing and equipping of the office of the Leader of the Council and of Cabinet, together with associated matters, since 8 May 2026.

SCOPE OF SUBJECT MATTER

Please treat the request as covering all of the following, whether at the proposal, request, quotation, approval, procurement or completion stage:

- (a) the refurbishment, redecoration or refit of the office currently used by the Leader of the Council, and of any room to which the Leader's office is to be, or is proposed to be, relocated;*
- (b) the relocation of the Leader's office to a different or larger room, including the identification of any such room, its previous use, any displacement of existing occupants or functions, and any works, refurbishment or alterations carried out or proposed to that room to prepare it for the Leader's occupation;*
- (c) the purchase, hire, loan or supply of furniture or IT equipment for the Leader's office, including but not limited to a sofa, desk or desks, chairs and storage, and conferencing facilities;*
- (d) the sourcing, purchase, hire, loan, valuation, transport or placement of any antique desk, or any other antique or bespoke item of furniture;*
- (e) the installation, fitting or alteration of any new doors, including any associated structural work, fire safety assessment, locksmithing or access control;*
- (f) the supply, purchase or installation of any flag, flagpole, flag stand, bracket or related fitting;*
- (g) the conversion, fitting out or re-purposing of any room into a Cabinet office or Cabinet working space, including the supply or installation of desks, workstations, IT terminals or equipment, cabling, network points and telephony;*
- (h) any associated works arising from the above, including decorating, flooring or carpeting, electrical work, partitioning, signage, blinds or window dressings, and audio-visual equipment;*
- (i) any other works, purchases or arrangements relating to the accommodation, furnishing or equipping of the Leader's office or Cabinet accommodation not otherwise specified above;*

(j) any request, instruction, suggestion or expression of preference for any of the matters at (a) to (i) above, whether made by the Leader of the Council, by any other councillor, or by any officer, and including any such request relayed, passed on or communicated by an officer on behalf of the Leader or any other councillor.

INDIVIDUALS AND TEAMS

To assist in locating the information, I should be grateful if the search included information held by, and correspondence between, the following individuals and teams, although the request is not limited to them:

- The Leader of the Council, Councillor Michael Hadwen, and any personal assistant, officer or staff member supporting his office;*
- The Joint Chief Executives, Andrew Cook and Mark Ash, and their personal assistants and offices;*
- The Monitoring Officer and Assistant Director (Governance, Legal and Assurance), Nigel Inniss, and the legal team;*
- Democratic Services, including the Head of Democratic Services;*
- Facilities Management;*
- Corporate Property, Estates and Property Services;*
- The Section 151 Officer and the Finance team;*
- Procurement and commercial staff;*
- ICT and Digital Services;*
- Health and Safety;*
- Any Cabinet Member or member of the administration involved;*
- Any external contractor or supplier engaged in connection with the above.*

INFORMATION REQUESTED

For each of the matters at (a) to (j) above, please provide:

- 1. All recorded information held, including emails, letters, memoranda, file notes, notes or minutes of meetings, briefing notes, request forms, work orders, facilities or IT helpdesk tickets, and any messages sent via Microsoft Teams or other messaging platforms (including phone apps) where retained as records of council business;*
- 2. Any quotations, estimates, specifications, schedules of works, drawings, plans or supplier proposals, including early or draft quotations and specifications where these exist;*

Please see the attached emails. Please note the redacted information is being withheld under s.40 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as it constitutes personal data, further details on this exemption can be found at the bottom of this response document.

IT Ticket – request from Property Change Board ref. SR-627462:

The Leader of SCC would like to make some changes to the office space within Gold 2 EH. The catchpole room will become an office, a cabinet room will be an office / meeting room Move hybrid kit in the catchpole onto a TV stand, repositioned to a corner for use while Cllr Hadwen is sitting at his newly created

office. power and data to be found and moved and patched in. Cabinet room to be reconfigured to allow 4 desks with associated power, data and IT kit. Access control to be introduced to the catchpole room to include 2 exit buttons, one by the door and one to allow Cllr Hadwen to release the door from his desk. Former catchpole room to have restricted access to 2 people only, Cllr Hadwen and 1 other (tbc)

Signed on as a Project – ref PRJ-761
Floor plan included

3. *Any purchase orders, requisitions, invoices or receipts;*
4. *Any business case, budget approval, authorisation, sign-off or delegated decision record;*

Approval for the requested changes to the Leader's accommodation and associated changes was given by Andrew Cook, Joint Chief Executive (see Teams exchange included for Q1)

5. *Any procurement records, including supplier selection, comparison of quotations and contract documentation;*

Please see response to Q1.

6. *The budget line, cost centre or cost code against which the expenditure has been or is proposed to be charged, and the source of funding;*

The cost of the works will be paid for by the Corporate Services Directorate; where possible, existing furniture/equipment will be reused.

7. *The current status of each matter (for example: requested, under consideration, quoted, approved, ordered, in progress or completed);*

8. *The total estimated or actual cost of each matter;*

Please see the response to Q1.

9. *The identity of any external supplier, contractor, designer, dealer or other third party engaged or approached;*

Advania UK for others please see the response to Q1.

10. *Any recorded information evidencing the origin of each request, including who requested, instructed or suggested it, the date on which they did so, and, where the request was relayed or communicated by an officer, the identity of that officer and of the councillor on whose behalf it was made.*

The request for changes to the Leader's accommodation and associated changes was made by the Leader of the Council and passed on via Andrew Cook, Joint Chief Executive. Works to progress the changes requested have been co-ordinated by the Assistant Director for Assets & Investment and the Council's Corporate Property Team.

Redacted Information

All information released in response to a Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) request is deemed to be in the public domain. As such we must consider whether or not the

requested information qualifies as personal information and should therefore not be released into the public domain.

The council has determined that this is personal information and is therefore exempt from disclosure under **section 40** of the FOIA.

The Council considered the following, including the possible consequences of disclosure for the data subjects concerned and their reasonable expectations as to the use of their data:

- expectations of the individuals concerned about personal information being put into the public domain;
- reasonable expectations - the data subjects concerned would have a legitimate expectation of privacy concerning their personal information and would not have anticipated this being put into the public domain;
- whether or not the requested information could be anonymised; and
- balancing the individual's rights and the legitimate interests - In past cases the Information Commissioner has weighed the individual's rights to privacy against the public interest in disclosure. There is no presumption in favour of releasing personal data.

This is an absolute exemption, which means that if the condition is satisfied there is no additional public interest test to consider.

In assessing fairness, the Council considered the likely consequences of disclosure of the requested information. Personal information should not be used in ways that have unjustified adverse effects on the individuals concerned. The council also considered whether such disclosure would be within the reasonable expectations of the individuals, given that any response to a request under the FOIA is deemed to be in the public domain. The council believes that in this instance it is not fair to disclose personal data and is therefore withholding the requested information under section 40 of the FOIA.

Please note, due to the size and number of attachments included, this is a partial response. To see the full version, please do not hesitate to contact the FOI team at : FOI@suffolk.gov.uk