

1. APPROVAL FOR COUNCIL TO LEASE ADDITIONAL PREMISES

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The purpose of this report is to seek the Council's approval to lease additional premises for the purpose of office accommodation for a two year period.

BACKGROUND

The Council's Change Proposal adopted last year which resulted in significant savings, has produced a series of new unit structures. In particular, it has created a new Water and Waste Unit, Parks and Waterways Unit, and brought together new teams within the Policy, Information and Operations Directorates.

As advised to the Council, we have been undertaking planning to bring those Units together, as best we can, in terms of accommodation within the Civic Offices. Particularly where we are bringing together new teams, it is highly desirable to have them in one place so that new team cultures can develop.

As Councillors will be aware, this building is cramped and overcrowded, and rearranging teams within the building is like a complicated jigsaw. After various attempts to design appropriate new layouts, we have reached the conclusion that it is not possible to achieve a satisfactory layout without either having some unsatisfactory splits between teams, undertaking significant alterations, or producing even more unsatisfactory work conditions for some.

PROPOSAL

New office accommodation within the next two years will provide a remedy for this, but in the meantime it is appropriate to provide some short term relief. By moving approximately 35 – 40 people out of this building, we are able to free up enough space to make the new arrangements work reasonably well, and for some marginally better than the current arrangements. This is an interim solution which will provide some relief in the short to medium term.

It is proposed to move the City Plan team from Environmental Services, the Policy Planning team from the Policy Directorate, and a small Electrical Engineering team from City Solutions, to an off-site location. None of these teams have significant contact with the public, and when necessary such contact can be arranged either at this building or by appointment.

FUNDING

The Property Asset budget will be managed in such a way that the additional leasing cost is covered by either savings or deferring other building related costs. No increase to the budget is sought.

PROPERTY OPTIONS

Applying commonly utilised industry occupancy rates it was considered that approximately 700m² to 800m² of additional space would be required.

Owing to the fact that this investigation was constrained by a preference for space in the immediate vicinity the market was canvassed through real estate agents, contacts and follow up on landlord advertising.

The options, market information and recommendation are contained in a public excluded report within this agenda.

Recommendation: That the recommendation contained in the public excluded section of this report be adopted.