

## 1. OFFICE ACCOMMODATION

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The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the lease of additional office accommodation.

The Council has now included in its draft Long Term Council Community Plan (LTCCP) funding for a new building to replace the current Civic Offices. That is a great step forward and welcomed by staff and Councillors alike. However, it will be four to five years until that is available, and in the meantime we need to make do with the currently less than satisfactory arrangements.

The Civic Offices building is already not large enough, and we currently lease office space in a building above Glassons in Cashel Street (875 sq m).

Accommodation reshuffles are currently under way to bring together some of the new groups and units under our new structure. We have kept that reshuffle to a minimum, and have deliberately not spent money on new walls etc unless absolutely necessary. However, as we have found in the past rearrangements, when you try to rearrange the jigsaw with different shaped pieces, they never all fit together again, unless you rearrange the whole jigsaw (which is very expensive and disruptive).

There will no doubt be different demands and changes over the period until the new building is completed, and leasing more additional space in another building is the obvious solution to current and near future needs. Even if we have some reductions in staff numbers over the period leading to the new building, the ability to have fewer people in the Civic Offices, with more space for some areas currently over-peopled and cramped, will be a positive health and safety outcome.

Council property staff have been negotiating the lease of 800 square metres in the building at 92 Lichfield Street, where the existing heritage building is being upgraded and the interior redesigned and modernised. This building diagonally meets the rear of the current annex building, so services and communications between the two buildings are very simple. It is likely that the space will be used to bring together the new customer contact phone centre.

This is really a management matter of providing adequate and suitable accommodation to provide the services and administration to achieve the Council's outputs, within existing budgets. The only reason this report is coming before the Council is that the negotiated lease arrangement exceeds the delegations given to the Facility Assets Manager. Interestingly, we could spend substantially more on rearranging people within the current building (and that wouldn't be hard to do) within staff delegations.

The negotiated lease arrangements are included in the public excluded section of this report.

This cost will be covered within existing budgets, ie no new budget money is sought.

**Recommendation:** That the Council approve the leasing of approximately 800 square metres of office accommodation at 92 Lichfield Street on the terms and conditions contained in the public excluded section of this report.