

Relocation of the Register Office

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To approve the principle of relocating the Register Office from Traffic Street and to inform the Registrar General accordingly.
- 1.2 To authorise the Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Performance Management, Economic Development and Housing to conclude terms for compensation for the freehold of the Traffic Street premises with Westfield Shoppingtowns Ltd.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The proposals for the redevelopment and extension of the Eagle Shopping Centre include the site of the Register Office at Traffic Street.
- 2.2 Westfield will compensate the Council for the loss of the existing premises on an equivalent reinstatement basis.
- 2.3 As the City Council is promoting the Compulsory Purchase Order for the Eagle Centre redevelopment, it needs to agree terms for the Register Office separately.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The City of Derby (City Centre redevelopment) CPO 2003 was made in June 2003. Within the area required for the redevelopment is the Register Office in Traffic Street.
- 3.2 Negotiations have been taking place for some time with Westfield Shoppingtowns Ltd who will carry out the redevelopment for their purchase of the existing building. These discussions have been on the basis that Westfield pay for a replacement Register Office and compensate the Council for the disturbance and costs of the move. This approach is consistent with the equivalent reinstatement basis adopted within the statutory compensation provisions that would apply if the Council were not also promoting the CPO.

- 3.3 Officers and representatives of Westfield have considered in depth various alternative premises for the relocation. However, to provide the accommodation required, especially a marriage room of sufficient size, is proving difficult, particularly in a building in the City centre. An oral update will be given at the meeting.
- 3.4 Westfield would wish to take possession of the existing Register Office by autumn this year at the latest. To meet such a time-scale, terms for the relocation need to be agreed and works on the new premises started as soon as possible. Therefore, whilst a finalised location and scheme has not been agreed to allow one option to be pursued in depth, it is proposed to authorise the Director of Corporate Services and appropriate Cabinet Member to conclude final terms. There are commercial sensitivities to the properties involved until the final terms have been concluded.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4. A number of alternative City centre locations have been considered. The physical constraints of existing buildings and the lack of time that make new build impractical have limited the feasible alternatives.

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	Appendix 1 – Implications

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. In accordance with the Compensation Code, the Council will be compensated for the loss of the freehold of the Traffic Street Register Office on an equivalent reinstatement basis.

Legal

2. Under the provisions of the Registration Service Act 1953, Councils are required to provide and maintain for each district a register office for the Superintendent Registrar according to a plan approved by the Registrar General, and to include to the satisfaction of the Registrar General a fireproof repository for the district records.

Local schemes also require the Council to provide, equip and maintain offices for registrars of births and deaths (head office).

There can only be one register office in a registration district, and that must be in one building.

The Registrar General is especially concerned that the accommodation provided for the celebration of civil marriages shall be of a high standard. Ideally register offices should be easily accessible to the public, be close to the main public transport routes and have car parking available on site or nearby. Within the register office, consideration must be given to the security of staff, stock and cash, access for disabled people and the provision of separate waiting areas for marriage parties and those attending to register a birth or a death.

The Local Government Association Good Practice Guide for Registration specifies minimum standards for registration accommodation, which HMIs use as part of their inspection criteria.

Personnel

3. Staff within the service will need to be consulted on the relocation once terms for the new premises have been agreed.

Corporate Themes and Priorities

4. The Register Office relocation would allow the expansion of the Eagle Shopping Centre which supports our theme of a great place to live and our priority of enhancing the economic vitality of our City to produce more business and jobs, as well as improving the physical environment of our City and streets.