
**RELOCATION OF REGISTRATION SERVICE AND
FURTHER TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS**

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources Access and Diversity

1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on progress with the refurbishment and occupation of the Town Hall.
- 1.2 To seek approval for the relocation of the Registration Service from Pocklingtons Walk to the Town Hall which gives opportunities for further improvements to the Town Hall.
- 1.3 To secure the transfer of funding from existing schemes to enable this initiative to commence.

2 SUMMARY

- 2.1 In the last four years, a good deal of progress has been made in refurbishing and bringing the Town Hall back into use. In the light of prospective changes to be introduced by Central Government in the way the Registration Service is to be delivered, the opportunity now exists to review the relocation of this service.

It is now possible to consider the Town Hall and the scheme will enable a further proportion of the Town Hall to be brought into appropriate use to a standard in keeping with the refurbished areas. It will help the Town Hall once again to be a focal point in the lives of the Leicester people. The reception area will be restored in keeping with the original design.

- 2.2 The Supporting Information contains:

Appendix 1 Town Hall improvements to date; and

Appendix 2 Relocation of Register Office and further improvements.

3 FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The estimated scheme costs are:

<u>Location</u>	<u>Cost (£)</u>
Ground Floor	387,000
1st and 3rd Floors	58,000
Contingencies	<u>50,000</u>
Estimated Scheme Total	£495,000 =====

3.2 The capital programme contains £819,000 towards the relocation of the Register Office. It was envisaged that the proceeds of sale of the Pocklington's Walk premises would also contribute. The revised scheme enables the capital provision to be reduced by £319,000 to £500,000 and in addition, the earmarked capital receipts from the disposal of related sites of £600,000 can be freed up, resulting in a net positive effect of £919,000

3.3 The usual Contract and Financial Procedure Rules will be followed for the scheme.

Other Implications	Yes/No	Paragraph References within this Report
Equal Opportunities	NO	
Policy	NO	
Sustainable and Environmental	NO	
Crime and Disorder	NO	
Human Rights Act	NO	
Elderly Persons/People on Low Incomes	NO	

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 That the relocation of the Registration Service into the Town Hall and the further improvement works as described in Appendix 2, be approved.

4.2 That the revised scheme be financed from the capital programme provision for the Register Office allocation and that provision be reduced from £819,000 to £500,000.

4.3 That the Director of Resources, Access and Diversity finalise the scheme details and proceed with the necessary services and works required.

4.4 That the Head of Legal Services enter into any necessary contracts to enable the scheme to be undertaken.

5 REPORT AUTHOR/OFFICER TO CONTACT

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TOWN HALL IMPROVEMENTS TO DATE

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

In recent years, the following refurbishments and new uses have been made of the Town Hall:

IMPROVEMENT	STATUS	IMPACT
Refurbishment of second floor	Completed	To allow parts of Social Services and Arts & Leisure Departments to occupy.
Refurbishment and repainting of Town Hall Square Fountain	Completed	
Refurbishment of third floor accommodation in Bowling Green Street wing	In Progress	To bring this derelict accommodation up to office accommodation standards
Provision of new lift at the front of the building	Completed	To serve all floors except the third
Removal of old lift at the front of the building	Completed.	
Provision of new lift in existing shaft at the rear (Bowling Green Street wing)	In Progress	To serve all floors
Survey of the effectiveness and efficiency of the heating system	Yet to be Undertaken	
Refurbishment of rooms	Completed	To accommodate Electoral Registration, District Auditor and H M Coroner
Provision of lift at Horsefair Street	Completed	To allow access for persons unable to negotiate
Upgrading of fire alarms and fire compartmentation	Completed	To comply with modern fire regulations
Other works previously approved will still go ahead where they do not conflict with the present proposals.		

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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 OUTLINE BRIEF

- 1.1 A feasibility exercise of relocating the Registration Services into the Town Hall was carried out.
- 1.2 The initial objective was to provide qualified, indicative costs to accommodate the services and associated improvements:
- (a) Provision of Offices for Principal Registrars.
 - (b) Provision of individual offices to cater for Registrars.
 - (c) General reception/main enquiry counter and general office space.
 - (d) Provision of disabled persons access.
 - (e) Provision of secure and conditioned file storage.
 - (f) Provision of Marriage Rooms.
 - (g) Provision of Waiting/Meeting Rooms.
 - (h) Provision of WC facilities.
 - (i) Appropriate Security improvements.
 - (j) Improvements/refurbishments to the existing main Foyer.
 - (k) Refurbishment of Courtroom No 2.
 - (l) Disbursement and adaptations to the existing third floor offices (to accommodate displaced staff).

2 PROPOSED BEST FIT OF THE BRIEF

- 2.1 The above accommodation requirements may be best met by the use of the rear elevation (Bowling Green Street) of the Town Hall, although the positioning of the elements of the service is subject to further consultation.

3 CONDITIONS/RESTRICTIONS

- 3.1 A more detailed measured evaluation of the Services requirements (by reviewing previous schemes) with that of the available space in the Town Hall, is still required.
- 3.2 Disabled Persons Access – The implications for a new external ramp and steps to access the proposed reception from Bowling Green Street, which although possible does require further detailed consultation having due regard to the remaining free pavement area adjacent to the proposed ramp which could be contrary to the Leicester City Council’s Highways Policies.
- 3.3 Alternative arrangements for access is available by the use the existing level access for disabled persons off Bowling Green Street and the renewal of the ramp and inclusion of a platform lift incorporated into the existing toilet area will facilitate access to the general office and give good access to the marriage rooms albeit at the loss of staff toilet facilities.
- 3.4 Listed building consent will be required for most elements of the scheme. The design for the new external ramp by its need to be sympathetic to the Town Hall would impact on its cost and consequently could be an expensive option.
- 3.5 The requirements for reception(s) to cater for the potential numbers of the public may warrant some reconfiguration of existing areas.
- 3.6 Security measures will need to be looked at in greater detail to fully assess implications and requirements to cater for interface between public/staff and office areas.
- 3.7 Further detailed work regarding which rooms to be identified as “Marriage Rooms” is to be undertaken. There is a desire to achieve a “straight through” flow for marriage parties, whilst allowing them to exit onto Town Hall Square for the obvious photographic opportunities that this will bring.
- 3.8 The use of Town Hall Square for the parking of wedding cars (two per wedding) will be pursued.

4 SCHEME BENEFITS

- 4.1 The remaining ground floor public rooms currently awaiting refurbishment will all be brought into upgraded use.
- 4.2 The principal reception area of the Town Hall and the associated corridors will all benefit from upgrading to “original” standards.
- 4.3 A principal reception desk will be created in the existing foyer to act as a focal point for the building, again, in keeping with the original architecture and design of the Town Hall.
- 4.4 The Town Hall will once again become a major focal point in the lives of many Leicester City residents and the scheme will add interest and spectacle to the City Centre in general and to the Town Hall Square specifically.

- 4.5 The current Pocklingtons Walk location will be able to be released from service use and declared surplus to requirements, with the benefits that may accrue.
- 4.6 The amount of on-street “blue badge” car parking makes this area particularly attractive as does the closeness of multi-storey and on-road pay and display parking.
- 4.7 This scheme will complete the refurbishment of the ground floor except for the area occupied by the Coroner’s Office and Court Room 1 and with previous works, substantially completes the second and third floor areas.

5 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation has taken place with the Service Director (Democratic Services) and one of his Managers in charge of the Registration Service. Further discussions and consultation have also taken place with architects and other specific professional bodies in other Departments who would be actively involved in this Project.

6 BACKGROUND PAPERS – LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

- 6.1 None.

7 REASONS FOR TREATING THE REPORT AS “NOT FOR PUBLICATION”

- 7.1 Not applicable.