



Date of Meeting	
Portfolio	Leader of the Council
Report Author	Beverley Hirst/Michael Smith
Public/Private Document	Private

Approval to acquire new Leasehold Premises – Relocation of Unison from Richard Street to Chichester Court

Executive Summary

1. The report seeks approval to the relocation of Unison from Richard Street to Chichester Court by way of the Council taking a new five year lease and further seeks approval to the terms of the proposed lease, in order to facilitate the redevelopment of Richard Street as part of the former Rochdale fire station redevelopment.

Recommendation

- 2.1 That approval is granted for Rochdale Borough Council to enter into a new five year lease of offices at Chichester Court, Milnrow Road, Rochdale on terms provisionally agreed and set out in paragraph 5.0 of this report.
- 2.2 That each party bears its own costs in respect of the transaction.
- 2.3 That the Assistant Director of Legal, Governance and Workforce be instructed to enter into the necessary legal documentation.

Reason for Recommendation

- 3.1 To secure vacant possession of the premises at Richard Street to facilitate a full refurbishment of the premises as part of the former Rochdale Fire station redevelopment scheme, forming part of the wider Station Gateway Strategy.

Key Points for Consideration

- 4.1 The former Rochdale Fire Station is currently being redeveloped to provide a new fire station museum and managed workspace accommodation. The work is well advanced and due to be completed in early 2021.

- 4.2 Richard Street offices are situated to the rear of the fire station building on the opposite side of the fire station yard. Richard Street is currently occupied by Unison and NSL.
- 4.3 Additional funding has now been secured through ERDF and Towns Fund Accelerator which means that the refurbishment of the Richard Street property can be added to the redevelopment programme.
- 4.4 In order to facilitate the refurbishment vacant possession of the premises is required and work has been ongoing to identify suitable alternative premises for both Unison and NSL.
- 4.5 No suitable properties already in the Council's ownership could be identified but Unison have confirmed that offices at Chichester Court are suitable for their requirements and have confirmed their agreement to relocating to these offices.
- 4.6 Work is also well advanced in identifying suitable alternative premises for NSL. Due to the contractual arrangements between RBC and NSL, when relocating NSL will be taking on the lease of their new premises direct with the landlord.

Alternatives Considered

Do nothing- if Unison were not relocated then the redevelopment of Richard Street as part of the Fire Station redevelopment would not be able to go ahead.

Relocate to premises already in Council ownership – a search was undertaken of Council owned premises but nothing was identified that would be suitable for the relocation of Unison.

Costs and Budget Summary

- 5.1 Terms have provisionally been agreed for a five year lease of the premises. The rent will be £14,000 per annum for the first three years of the lease, increasing to £15,000 per annum at commencement of year 4 of the lease.
- 5.2 The landlord has agreed to a three month rent free period at commencement of the lease and shall also undertake some minor accommodation works.
- 5.3 RBC shall undertake some minor fitting out works prior to occupation.
- 5.4 All costs are to be met by the Head of Workforce and Organisational Development as part of their agreement with Unison for the provision of services.

Risk and Policy Implications

6. Vacant possession is required by December 2020 in order to allow work to commence to satisfy funding requirements. Failure to secure the proposed lease may mean that other suitable alternative premises cannot be found in time to meet this deadline.

Consultation

7. Consultation has taken place with the Assistant Director of Head of Legal, Governance and Workforce, the Head of Workforce and Organisational Development and the Director of Resources.

Background Papers	Place of Inspection
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| 8. Agreed Heads of Terms.
Sales particulars | Attached as Appendix 1.
Attached as Appendix 2. |
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For Further Information Contact:	Michael Smith, Surveyor, Estates and Asset Management 01706 924179
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