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Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration

8 March 2017

**Name of Cabinet Member:**

Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration - Councillor J O'Boyle

**Executive Director Approving Submission of the report:**

Executive Director of Place

**Ward(s) affected:**

**St Michaels**

**Title: Response to Petition Requesting the Removal of the Escalator in the Upper Precinct**

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**Is this a key decision?**

No

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**Executive Summary:**

This report responds to a petition bearing 312 signatures which was submitted to the City Council. The petition is supported by Councillor Roger Bailey. The petition requests that the City Council investigate the possibility of removing the Upper Precinct escalator. The report also provides information on previous and continuing negotiations to remove the escalator.

**Recommendations:**

The Cabinet Member for Jobs and Regeneration is recommended to:

- (1) Request that officers continue to negotiate with the current owners of the Upper Precinct in order to assist in facilitating the removal of the escalator.
- (2) That following these negotiations, officers be requested to submit a report to Cabinet outlining how the Council may assist in removing the escalator.
- (3) That officers be requested to inform the petitioners of the situation.

**List of Appendices included:**  
None

**Other useful background papers:**  
None

**Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?**  
No

**Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?**  
No

**Will this report go to Council?**  
No

**Report title: Response to Petition Requesting the Removal of the Escalator in the Upper Precinct**

**1. Context (or background)**

- 1.1 A petition bearing 312 signatures has been received calling for the removal of the escalator in Upper Precinct to restore a “strong element of the appeal of the original symmetrical 1950’s Gibson layout”.
- 1.2 The desire to de-clutter the Precinct is not new and has been a long held ambition of the Council. Prior to the petition the Council has been in discussions with the previous owners of the Upper Precinct. At that time the former owners were not prepared to commit to the removal of the escalator.
- 1.3 Immediately following the sale of the Upper Precinct last year the Council commenced exploratory discussions with the new owners to remove the escalator and improve the shops. These discussions are continuing and would, if successful achieve the same aims as the petition.
- 1.4 It should be noted that this work is part of a larger attempt to both de-clutter the city centre and bring more legibility that includes the extensive public realm schemes that have already taken place and the current projects to re-open the link from Hertford Street to Broadgate Square and the removal of the large planters in Smithford Way.

**2. Options considered and recommended proposal**

- 2.1 It is recommended to continue to negotiate with the owners of the escalator and the shops in Upper Precinct to try to facilitate the removal of the escalator.
- 2.2 The removal of the escalator not only provides the opportunity to de-clutter the city centre which helps restore some of the elements of the Gibson plan but it also provides an opportunity to improve the links to the City Centre South scheme and a chance to improve the shops in this area. This will both retain occupiers and to improve confidence in the scheme and the city.
- 2.3 The cost of removing the escalator are likely to be high and improving public the new owner will need to reconcile these in a business case for its investors. Ultimately there may be a shortfall in funding to achieve this and the upgrading of the public realm that would be an integral part of this scheme.
- 2.4 The alternative to the above course of action would be to do nothing. This is not considered an option as it may mean the Council misses the opportunity to remove the escalators for the foreseeable future.

**3. Results of consultation undertaken**

- 3.1 No consultation has taken place at this time.

**4. Timetable for implementing this decision**

- 4.1 The recommendation to continue to negotiate if approved will be implemented immediately.

## **5. Comments from Director of Resources and Corporate Services**

### **5.1 Financial implications**

There are no financial implications within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any financial implications would be detailed at that time.

### **5.2 Legal implications**

There are no legal implications within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any legal implications would be detailed at that time.

### **5.3 Other implications**

There are no other implications within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any other implications would be detailed at that time.

### **6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?**

The recommendations in this report are to assist in the aspiration to create a vibrant city centre for the benefit of its residents with the creation of an improved environment. This is expected to increase footfall in the city centre and assist in broadening the catchment shopper population. The removal of the escalator and improvement of the shops on Upper Precinct will also ultimately benefit the proposals for the City Centre South development completing the retail circuit.

### **6.2 How is risk being managed?**

There is no risk within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any risk to the Council would be detailed at that time.

### **6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?**

There is no impact upon the organisation within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any potential impact upon the organisation would be detailed at that time.

### **6.4 Equalities / EIA**

This decision does not impact on Equalities

## 6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

There are no other implications or impact on the environment within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any implications or impact on the environment would be detailed at that time.

## 6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

There are no other implications for partner organisations within the recommendations above. Once negotiations have concluded these will be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet / Council and any implications to partner organisations would be detailed at that time.

### Report author(s):

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**Directorate: Place**

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