

British Transport Police (BTP) could move into Edinburgh Council's headquarters

British Transport Police (BTP) could be moving into Edinburgh Council's headquarters under plans set to be voted on by councillors next week.

Council officers are recommending councillors extend a 10 year lease to the BTP for space in the city's Waverley Court office building.

A council report says that the space would not be used as a 'police station' – rather, it would be used for offices, amenity facilities and storage.

The police service, which covers railway stations across the UK, has a station in the city near Haymarket railway station.

But it is looking for office space closer to Waverley Station, the second-busiest railway station in Scotland.

The report says that "neither persons detained by BTP nor witnesses" would be brought onto the site of the council-owned building.

Edinburgh Council would bring in about £185,000 per year from the lease, with the police service paying £95,500 per year in rent and about £90,000 towards the costs of running the

building.

BTP would take up 444 square metres in the office block, which sits southeast of Waverley Station on East Market Street.

According to the report, the pandemic and the adoption of home working has led to occupancy rates in the building falling.

Edinburgh Council has already accommodated several other tenants in Waverley Court, including environmental protection agency SEPA, Visit Scotland and Skills Development Scotland.

BTP's space would be on the courtyard level of the building, displacing some council staff who would be resited elsewhere in Waverley Court.

The lease would include access by BTP staff to common facilities in the building, such as the canteen, secure cycle parking and some meeting rooms.

If the lease is approved, BTP would cordon off their space in the building prior to staff moving in close to the end of 2025.

There would be a rent review five years into the lease, with a clause allowing BTP to break the lease at year seven.

Labour councillor Mandy Watt, convener of the Finance and Resources committee said: "If agreed at next week's committee, we will look forward to welcoming British Transport Police into Waverley Court, which is quickly becoming a true Partnership Hub, with organisations from all parts of the public sector joining forces to make greater use of the space and share expertise.

"By welcoming these organisations in, we are generating significant income for the Council and making sure our headquarters is operated in the most sustainable, efficient, and collaborative way."

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter