



Norwich Evening News

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Crushing blow as we miss out on 2,500 jobs

Derek James: How the Blitz changed Norwich p18



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SNAPSHOT

Hopes that Norwich's economy would be handed a huge shot in the arm through hundreds of Government jobs moving to the city have been dashed.

Norwich was today dealt a huge blow after hopes that hundreds of civil service jobs could come to the city were dashed.

Earlier this year the Evening News revealed that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) and the Home Office were planning on relocating hundreds of staff here as part of Government plans to relocate 20,000 civil service jobs from London and the South East to cut costs.

Hopes were high that up to 2,500 jobs would be created in Norwich and the city economy would benefit from the knock-on effect on spending in retail, property and local businesses. The move was welcomed by

MPs, council bosses and business leaders.

But today Defra revealed that it would not be moving any new jobs to the city.

Spokesman Warwick Smith said: "The situation is that we are looking at bringing all our staff who currently work in and around the city together in one office. A preferred site has been chosen - planning on this is still going on. However, this will not mean staff being relocated from other places - for example London or the South. It's rather trying to bring everyone from the Defra family in the Norwich area together on one site."

The Home Office's plans remained unclear today with nobody available to comment at the time of going to press.

Dr Ian Gibson, MP for Norwich North, said: "This is bad news. I think it is a fairly stupid decision. It's better to get things out of London and encourage people to see that decisions should be made locally.



Steve Morphew: Development plans will not be derailed.

In December 2004, a delegation made up of representatives from South Norfolk, Broadland, Norwich and Norfolk County Council went to London to present their case for Norwich as a location

for Whitehall workers. We revealed how the Jarrold printworks, off Whitefriars, had been earmarked as the potential site for new Government buildings and Jarrold was in advanced talks with officials at Defra and the Home Office about moving hundreds of employees to a new £15m office development on the site.

The city council also announced it had drawn up controversial plans to demolish 50 council owned flats on Barrack Street to make room to build the new complex, which would include new offices for civil service workers, a hotel and 200 new homes.

Council leader Steve Morphew said Defra's announcement would not derail the development. He said: "Jarrold has to decide what the viability of the office accommodation is and we are anticipating it will attract a number of other people there as well."

He added that even if Defra
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