

Management Committee

20 September 2016

47 The Esplanade, Weymouth

For Decision

Briefholders

Cllr Jeff Cant - Finance and Assets

Cllr Andy Blackwood - Community Facilities

Senior Leadership Team Contact:

M Hamilton, Strategic Director

Report Author:

David Brown, Head of Assets & Infrastructure

Statutory Authority

Legal power to dispose of the land – s123 (2) and s 128(1) Local Government Act 1972 and Circular 06/03 Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.

Purpose of Report

- 1 To consider the current condition and future of 47 The Esplanade, Weymouth;
- 2 To consider the closure of the associated public toilets and the future need of re-provision;
- 3 To consider disposal of the building.

Officer Recommendations

- 4 (a) To close the public toilets in the building at the end of October 2016.
(b) To agree that the property is placed on the open market and sold
(c) (i) To cater for the summer season using temporary facilities for 2017. To agree a budget cost of £5,000 to be provided from the property reserve fund for funds to allow for the connection provision of the temporary toilet facilities and also
(ii) To agree to the appointment of an external consultant to explore feasibility options for a suitable location, service availability, draw up initial plans and obtain budget costs for the future re-provision of permanent toilet facilities within the seafront area. To agree a budget cost of £5,000 provided from the property reserve fund to allow for this feasibility work to be undertaken
(iii) To revert to committee for a decision as to whether any scheme, if feasible, should proceed.

Reason for Decision

- 5 (i) To enable the building to be bought back into full use within the private sector and to provide the Council with the ability to maximise the capital receipt from the sale of the property.
- (ii) To provide temporary toilet accommodation and to assess the feasibility of providing alternative toilet provision for the future to replace those being sold.

Background and Reason Decision Needed

- 6 The property is situated on the Esplanade at the junction of Bond Street. It is a listed building under the ownership of Weymouth & Portland Borough Council within the Town centre conservation area.
- 7 Accommodation is spread over 5 storeys including the gents toilets housed within the basement, ladies toilets at ground level and the upper 3 floors housing a self contained flat that was last occupied over 10 years ago.
- 8 The upper part of the building is in a considerable state of disrepair requiring extensive works, and estimated to be in excess of £40,000 to bring it back into a serviceable condition.
- 9 The building suffers from a poor narrow side access which means access to the upper residential levels is extremely problematic, and this is insufficient to allow furniture to be brought into the property easily. Further there is no upper level fire escape which creates fire evacuation and safety issues to any occupants.
- 10 The toilets have steps down to the basement for the gents and a step up to the ladies, these are not disabled compliant, and cannot easily be made so. Plumbing to the toilets has been brought through the basement of the residential accommodation and so separation of the building into different ownerships is not practical.
- 11 The Council has previously considered options for the use of the upper part of this building but with the access limitations, the fire and safety problems, and the extent of the required works this has not been viable or practical.
- 12 The ladies and gents toilet facilities are extensively used by beach users during the summer season, and also shoppers generally. There are however other public toilets further along the Esplanade.
- 13 The provision of modern fully accessible toilets could be considered but a location on the seafront side of the road, and in a conservation area will be challenging to achieve .Any new structure would require appropriate attention to design and location if planning permission was to be granted. The potential damage from the sea in storm conditions will also be a factor

and it is not certain that these challenges can be overcome to permit permanent re-provision.

- 14 If re-provision was wanted then a feasibility study with practical investigations, and design work would be needed. For this funding would be required to commission an external consultant to undertake the various feasibility enquiries, utilities availability and capacity, and initial design considerations. Assuming a scheme was feasible then a report and budget cost would be reported back to members to then decide if provision would proceed or not.
- 15 In summary a separation of the building into different ownerships so as to allow the continued use of the toilets is not practical. With the current repair liabilities, and the integration of the toilets with the residential then a sale of the whole building would appear to be a sensible way forward. This would then allow the building to be brought back into use, while giving a capital receipt to the Council.

Implications

Corporate Plan

- 14 The disposal of the premises is in accordance with the Council's adopted Assets Management plan. It could depending on the future use of the building when disposed support the Council's corporate priority of "Building a Stronger Local Economy".

Financial

- 15 The sale of the property would generate a reasonable capital receipt and this could be used towards any future provision if feasible and wanted, or to other required projects.
- 16 Some saving from the closure of the toilets would occur, but if alternative facilities are provided the cost of operating these would most likely be similar.

Equalities

- 18 The current property has significant access issues and is not DDA compliant.
- 19 Any future temporary or re-provided toilet facilities would meet the current legislative requirements.

Environmental

- 20 The property is a listed building within a conservation area therefore planning and development restrictions as detailed within the local plan will be applicable for any alternative use.

Economic Development

- 21 A future alternative use of the property, subject to planning permission and Listed Building consent etc. could benefit the Economy and potentially support job creation.

Human Resources

- 23 Resources to sell and market the property, but external agents would be utilised.

Consultation and Engagement

24 The Council has not consulted on this disposal but the current poor condition of the building, the lack of full use of this, the inability to bring it all into beneficial use, the lack of disabled facilities, and the inability to separate the building mean that there are limited options in dealing with this property apart from the sale of it.

Temporary facilities will be provided until the feasibility and cost of more permanent facilities is determined, and in any event both will be subject to obtaining the necessary statutory consents.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None

Footnote

Issues relating to financial, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

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