

# PROPERTY MATTERS

Place, Assets & Commercialisation Update

July 2021

## Redecoration at Ocean

Again, as part of planned maintenance the redecoration of the exterior cladding to the Ocean building in Exmouth has been successfully completed. Not only were there the challenges associated with covid restrictions, but we also had to ensure there was always safe public access into this popular building. Access scaffold needed to be redesigned when it was found that proposed scaffolding along one elevation could have caused drains to collapse



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*The latest deals and updates on the activities in Place, Assets & Commercialisation*

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Millwey Rise Workshops

## Letting agreed at Millwey Rise Workshops

Following vacation of Unit 8 Millwey Rise Workshops in Axminster by the previous tenant, the Estates Team moved swiftly to market the unit and agree terms for a new letting.

A successful marketing campaign saw significant interest in the unit and an increase in the rent achieved for the unit.

### Business Rates

Working with our appointed consultants the Estates Team are undertaking work to identify opportunities to reduce the Council's business rate liability.

As the overall cost of running premises becomes ever more important to business decisions, it is hoped that this work will identify potential savings which will reduce the costs associated with the Council's commercial estate.

The focus of this work at present is on the office accommodation and car parks.

## COVID Precautions Continue

The Covid 19 pandemic continues to present challenges for the Property and Facilities Management Team. The Team has continued to ensure all the required and necessary precautionary measures are maintained at Blackdown House, Exmouth Town Hall, East Devon Business Centre, and other relevant properties.

In May the Government declared that Public Meetings should be held on a face-to-face basis rather than virtually. The Facility officer has been very actively involved in ensuring the layout of the tables and chairs in the chamber at Blackdown House are both fully covid secure and democratically compliant.

## EXMOUTH & JACOBS LADDER BEACH HUT REFRESH

As part of the planned maintenance Exmouth beach huts 38 – 45 as well as the Jacobs Ladder beach huts have been refreshed with compliments being provide by the Public regarding the professionalism of our Officers and their quality of work

## New Look for Honiton Pool

Following Cabinet's approval of an increased budget, the Honiton Swimming Pool changing room, reception and associated areas refurbishment project has been competitively tendered via ProContract. Unfortunately, the received prices exceeded the budget allowances so an intensive process of Value Engineering was carried out. The result of this exercise has enabled the final anticipated project cost, including contingencies, to sit within the available budget, thus permitting commencement in September and completion prior to Christmas.

## Making an Entrance!

A new video door entry system has been installed at East Devon Business Centre. The system which cost around £11,000, enables direct access for customers of the tenants throughout the day. This is one of the measures taken as part of the Business Centre Transition project to enable savings to be made in the day to day running costs of the centre.



## Asset Valuation Work Completed

The Estates Team have completed the Annual Asset valuation work which forms part of the Council's Statement of Accounts.

The work involved providing Asset Valuations for a wide range of properties including Car Parks, Leisure Centres, Public Toilets and Industrial Estates.

The total value of the assets revalued is around £76m and this represents a significant proportion of the Council's general fund assets.

## Right to Buy Valuations in Demand

After a number of months with applications on hold the Estates Team have seen an increase in requests for valuations of properties for sales under the "Right to Buy" scheme.

These valuations are carried out on behalf of the Council's Housing Team and utilise the RICS qualified valuation resources within the Estates Team.

It is anticipated that the demand for valuations will continue to increase over the second half of the year with a significant number of applications already in the pipeline.