

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 1 March 2023

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release n/a

Esplanade Toilet Block, Sidmouth

Report summary:

This report sets out the details of an offer that the council has received from Rockfish to acquire the toilet block adjacent to the Drill Hall on Sidmouth seafront.

Following the review of the council owned public toilet facilities across East Devon, the Esplanade toilets in Sidmouth were earmarked as category B toilets. The toilets are therefore considered suitable for disposal to a third party on the basis that the purchaser continues to provide some toilet provision within any refurbished or redeveloped facility at the site.

Given the location of these toilets, adjacent to the Drill Hall, it was considered appropriate to discuss their disposal to Rockfish who have recently acquired the Drill Hall site, before considering taking the site to the market. The acquisition by Rockfish would give the opportunity for the toilet block to be incorporated into the refurbishment works at the Drill Hall, enhancing the appearance and offer of the restaurant facility.

Rockfish are able to be considered as a special purchaser and the council is able to negotiate with them directly rather than take the site to the market. With this in mind, the council has obtained a market valuation of the site for a long leasehold interest of 125 years, taking into account the requirement to provide 2 accessible toilet cubicles within the site. The market value was assessed at £65,000.

The council has now received an offer from Rockfish of £70,000 for a 125 year lease and there is a recommendation that this offer be accepted and Heads of Terms be entered into.

Rockfish will need to review their design works for the site and the planning permission prior to commencing works on site. This will result in a delay to their programme, however the opportunity to include the toilet block in their refurbishment programme will result in a much enhanced restaurant offer on this site.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes No

Policy Framework Yes No

Recommendation:

That Cabinet agrees to enter into detailed discussions with Rockfish in order to agree heads of terms for the disposal by way of a lease of the Esplanade Toilet Block on Sidmouth seafront, and that delegated authority is granted to the Assistant Director of Place Assets and Commercialisation in discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Assets, the Director of Finance and the Director of Governance and Licensing to agree the heads of terms and to agree and complete all the necessary documentation to enable the granting of the lease.

Reason for recommendation:

To enable the disposal of the Toilet Block on the Esplanade, Sidmouth which will result in a capital receipt to the council, and to facilitate an enhanced offer for the Rockfish restaurant at the Drill Hall site.

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Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- Climate Action and Emergency Response
- Coast, Country and Environment
- Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- Economy and Assets
- Finance
- Strategic Planning
- Sustainable Homes and Communities
- Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk; The risks associated with the disposal of this site, such as non-delivery, will be dealt with through the lease agreement with the purchaser.

Links to background information see [Agenda Item 6 \(Public Pack\)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 12/05/2021 18:00 \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#) Minute number 405 [Printed minutes 12th-May-2021 18.00 Cabinet.pdf \(eastdevon.gov.uk\)](#)

Council Plan

Priorities (check which apply)

- Better homes and communities for all
- A greener East Devon
- A resilient economy

Financial implications:

Financial details are contained within the report.

Legal implications:

There is no direct comment to be made, Legal Services will assist to put the required lease in place.