

Record of Decisions

Redevelopment of Former WCs - Corbyn Head and Preston (North)

Decision Taker

Cabinet on 14 December 2021.

Decision

That the use of the Growth Fund is approved to fund up to £1,250,000 for the redevelopment of former public toilets at Corbyn Head and up to £717,500 to fund the redevelopment of former public toilets at Preston, identified by the land edged red at Appendix 1, having demonstrated that the potential rental stream is sufficient to meet the terms of the Growth fund as set out in exempt Appendix 2; with due diligence to be delegated to the Director of Finance, and the Director of Asset Management, Investment and Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Tourism, to

- i) Agree and finalise the detailed lease terms and to enter into a 25 year lease with the preferred bidders; and
- ii) Ensure that the Growth Fund criteria are met as a consequence of the lease terms, including ensuring that the business case meets borrowing costs.

Reason for the Decision

The proposals would create in the region of 40 jobs, with established employers who offer training opportunities and have links with local colleges. The proposals would also raise the profile of the area and encourage inward investment from other businesses.

Implementation

This decision will come into force and may be implemented on 29 December 2021 unless the call-in procedure is triggered (as set out in the Standing Orders in relation to Overview and Scrutiny).

Information

The former WCs at Corbyn Head and Preston (North) are closed to the public and not fit for purpose. Both buildings were in a reasonable condition, but it was anticipated that they would fall further into disrepair. This may encourage anti-social behaviour and would not foster the impression of Torbay being a thriving place to live and visit if buildings in such prominent positions are empty and unused.

Following a marketing exercise in late 2020, the preferred bidders selected for Corbyn Head were WeSup Limited, and for Preston (North), Pierhead Cafes & Bars Limited. However, if final terms could not be agreed with the selected bidders, then alternative bidders would be considered.

The proposal would remove the ongoing maintenance liability of these buildings and represents an opportunity to:

- Create new jobs with training opportunities.
- Design good quality energy efficient buildings and require the operator to adopt environmentally friendly initiatives which may encourage others to follow suit.
- Generate a rental income and revenue from business rates. Once the Growth Fund finance is repaid, the asset will be purely income generating.

At the meeting Councillor Long proposed and Councillor Cowell seconded a motion that was agreed unanimously by the Cabinet, as set out above.

Alternative Options considered and rejected at the time of the decision

Alternative options included refurbishing the buildings and leasing them at a peppercorn rate or use only as WCs. This would create a revenue pressure on the Council with no identified funding source. This route would also forgo the opportunity to maximise the potential from these spaces and generate income from the buildings and may otherwise result in an ongoing maintenance liability for the Council.

Is this a Key Decision?

No – Reference Number: I086720

Does the call-in procedure apply?

Yes

Declarations of interest (including details of any relevant dispensations issued by the Standards Committee)

None.

Published

December 2021

Signed: _____
Leader of Torbay Council on behalf of the Cabinet

Date: _____