

RECORD OF EXECUTIVE DECISION

Tuesday, 15 October 2019

Decision No: (CAB 19/20 24228)

DECISION-MAKER:	CABINET
PORTFOLIO AREA:	HOMES AND CULTURE
SUBJECT:	THE FUTURE OF ST MARY'S LEISURE CENTRE
AUTHOR:	Paul Paskins

THE DECISION

- (i) To approve the disposal (by way of lease) of St Mary's Leisure Centre
- (ii) To delegate authority to the Service Director: Customer, Digital and Policy following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture, the Executive Director for Finance and the Service Director: Legal and Governance, to take all necessary steps to grant a lease and associated contract with the selected bidder following the completion of a competitive bidding process.

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

It is anticipated that approval of the recommendations of this report will result in a facility which will actively to contribute to all of the Council's Strategic objectives, achieve 'best consideration' and result in a vibrant and diverse facility which forms an integral part of the local community facilities and results in use and engagement from both the local community and residents of the wider city.

DETAILS OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

1. A Community Asset Transfer (CAT) – this option was considered, but has been rejected as it would not enable the Council to exercise sufficient control of the use of the Centre once it was transferred. This may result in the Centre not being used for a range of cross-community activities and this would not, therefore, support the outcome of the consultation described in the 'Consultation carried out' section of this report.
2. Continue to operate the Centre as a Leisure facility - undertake a bidding process to select a new operator to continue running the Centre as an (exclusively) leisure and sports facility. This option was rejected as a new leisure operator is likely to struggle to compete with Solent University ("SU's") new sports facility which is in close proximity and has over 40

pieces of cardio equipment, a sports hall, a fitness suite and a range of state of the art facilities and equipment. Around 20% of the users of the Centre were members of the public and 273 former users of the Centre have now transferred and use the gym facilities at SU's new building. Furthermore SU is a strategic partner to the Council and seeking to compete on a like-for-like basis is unlikely to be in the interests of either organisation or those who wish to use leisure facilities.

3. Lease the building on the open market without use restrictions (subject to planning permission) – the Council's assessment is that this is most likely to result in the facility being used for a purpose (such as a nightclub) which would not support the Council's objectives for the use of the facility, the beneficial outcomes of such use and the results of the consultation and has, therefore, been rejected.
4. Sell the site on for development into housing or an alternative use. There would be two options:-
 - Option one would be for the Centre to be demolished so that new housing or an alternative use-building could be developed, however due to its Grade 2 Listing, a developer is very unlikely to obtain permission to proceed with such a demolition.
 - Option two would be for a developer to convert the current building into living accommodation or an alternative use. This would present some issues due to the stairs and balcony being Grade 2 Listed so any accommodation would need to be developed around these restrictions. There is currently a flat on the 2nd floor but this is uninhabitable as the only available escape route is through the building. The Council's assessment is that it will be difficult to get planning permission due to its listing and therefore may not be financially viable to developers for housing.
5. It is highly unlikely that either of the options above would support the outcome of the consultation nor the Council's objectives and, therefore, these options have been rejected.

OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS CONCERNING THE DECISION

None.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

None.

CONFIRMED AS A TRUE RECORD

We certify that the decision this document records was made in accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 and is a true and accurate record of that decision.

Date: 15 October 2019

Decision Maker:
The Cabinet

Proper Officer:
Pat Wood

SCRUTINY

Note: This decision will come in to force at the expiry of 5 working days from the date of publication subject to any review under the Council's Scrutiny "Call-In" provisions.

Call-In Period expires on

Date of Call-in *(if applicable) (this suspends implementation)*

Call-in Procedure completed *(if applicable)*

Call-in heard by *(if applicable)*

Results of Call-in *(if applicable)*