

COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

Explanatory Note

The Leader of the Council has established Delegation Schemes by which certain decisions may be made by the relevant cabinet member or specific officers.

Cabinet member decisions are subject to review under the Call-in Procedure.

From the date the notice of the decision made is published there are five working days during which any five Councillors may sign a request for the decision to be reviewed (called in) and deliver it to the Proper Officer.

If, at the end of the period, no request has been made, the decision may be implemented. If a valid call- in request has been made, the matter will be referred to the Scrutiny Panel

Part A – To be completed by the appropriate Cabinet Member/Officer

Title of Report

Use of The Old Library by Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd

Delegated Power

To procure the specified service in the provision, implementation, maintenance and management of (... 2.) matters relating to the management of the Council's assets

Decisions Taken

To approve the inclusion of the Old Library (West Stockwell Street) as part of the lease for The Town Hall, to, Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd, for a term of up to 7 years.

To commit to a one-off expenditure of up to £53,000 required to bring the Old Library back into beneficial commercial use.

To delegate all subsequent, consequential, details relating to the above lease and financial arrangements to the Assistant Director for Place & Client Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources.

To note that "The Cells" and "Court Rooms" will continue to be commercially marketed.

Key Decision

No

Forward Plan

N/A

Reasons for the Decision

The Old Library, Cells and Courts have been vacant since a previous tenant left them in 2017, due to unviable business occupation of these premises. Since then they have been marketed unsuccessfully and the marketing agent advises that the proposals set out herein would be a good alternative option at this time. That is important in considering the Council's requirements to gain best considerations in the market when entering lease or disposal arrangements for public assets, as well as state aid deliberations.

The use of the buildings protects them from natural deterioration that occurs to unoccupied listed buildings and helps in preserving these assets for future generations. The immediate use will also return civic buildings with heritage value into a publicly accessible use, whereby visitors to events can enjoy the building as part of a sustainable enterprise. The initial investment by the Council will also provide a new wheelchair lift and make it accessible for all. This additional work also creates another new opportunity for local contractors that will help with economic recovery in being brought forward at this uncertain time.

The grant of a lease to CATL will facilitate better corporate events including weddings, on behalf of the Council, as well as making the building once again available to book for Council meetings when commercially viable. It will add a venue that gives diversity for the wedding package of the town hall, making this more attractive to people who wish to stay at the site when getting married, but who could not fill the Moot Hall. Consequently, it would also provide more income to the Council, to be generated from this asset via Colchester Amphora Trading Ltd (CATL).

Alternative Options

Continue to market the Old Library for use as a commercial restaurant/leisure venue. This has not proven successful since the Council obtained possession (and prior to this when it was marketed by the previous lessee). Continued marketing is therefore not recommended based on the lack of interest to date and expert advice on the current state of the restaurant/leisure letting market.

The Council could re-occupy the building itself. However, there is no Council requirement for this amount of space, and it would be contrary to our Asset Management Strategy; not being the best use of our assets and not bringing in additional income.

Conflict of Interest

None

Dispensation by Head of Paid Service

N/A

Dispensation by Monitoring Officer

N/A

Approved by Assistant Director Place & Client Services

Signature Mandy Jones

Date 10 November 2020

(**NB** For Key Decisions the report must be made available to the public for five clear days prior to the period for call-in commencing)

Part B – To be completed by the appropriate Portfolio Holder

I confirm that the above named officer consulted me in relation to the above matter.

Portfolio Holder for Business and Resources

Signature Cllr David King

Date 10 November 2020

PART C - To be completed by the Proper Officer (Democratic Services)**Officer/Portfolio Holder Decision Reference Number**

OFF-002-20

Implementation Date

This decision can be implemented if no request for the decision to be reviewed (call-in) has been made **after 5pm on 17 November 2020**

Call-in Procedure

The Decision Notice for this decision was published on the internet and placed in the Members' Room and the Customer Service Centre on **10 November 2020**.

A request for reference to the Scrutiny Panel must be made by **5pm on 17 November 2020**.

Signature of Proper Officer

Kate Randall