

Report for: Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning

Item number: 3

Title: Monument Way Toilets – Future use

Report

Authorised by: Lyn Garner, Director of Regeneration, Planning and Development

Lead Officer: Suzanne Johnson, Area Regeneration Manager (Bruce Grove, Tottenham Green, Seven Sisters)

Ward(s) affected: Tottenham Hale

Report for Key/

Non Key Decision: Key decision

1. Describe the issue under consideration

- 1.1. Monument Way toilets is a Council owned former toilet block which has been vacant and boarded up for many years. The building is in the Tottenham Green Conservation Area and is identified as a notable building of the Edwardian period. It is situated in a prominent location on Tottenham High Road at the junction of Monument Way, next to the historic High Cross Monument.
- 1.2. The building is in a poor state of repair and attracts a significant amount of enquiries from the public over the Council's future plans for the site. A strategy is needed to bring the building back into use as a successful commercial and community asset which contributes positively to the regeneration of Tottenham and improves the physical environment, and vitality and viability, of the High Road.
- 1.3. The project is part of Growth on the High Road (GotHR), a public realm improvement programme for Tottenham High Road jointly funded by the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Council. The programme includes a number of public realm projects aimed at improving the physical environment of the High Road and increasing its economic success. GotHR funded an architectural feasibility study for Monument Way toilets by Adams and Sutherland architects in 2015 which considered different uses for the building. As a result of the study, GLA and Council funding is currently available for initial capital works to allow an operator to take on the site in a more suitable condition for commercial use.
- 1.4. Following the completion of the feasibility study, and public consultation regarding future uses, this report seeks approval for a strategy to bring the building back into use as a cafe/bar and to seek an operator for the site.

2. Cabinet Member Introduction

- 2.1. Monument Way toilets is an important and prominent building on Tottenham High Road which has been unused for some time. I'm pleased that we are now able to progress with initial repair and improvement works to bring the building back into commercial use to continue the revitalisation and regeneration of the High Road.

3. Recommendations

That the Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Planning:

- 3.1. Note the outcome of the feasibility study and community consultation.
- 3.2. Declare the building surplus to Council requirements and available to be advertised for commercial let on a leasehold basis as a cafe/bar in accordance with the requirements and criteria set out in section 6.16.
- 3.3. Approve the implementation of the delivery strategy which includes:
 - Undertaking the initial phase of construction works to renovate the building.
 - Developing a letting strategy and advert for the building, advertising the building for commercial let, and appointing an operator.

4. Reasons for decision

- 4.1 To bring this important and prominent building back into use as a commercial and community asset which will contribute positively to the regeneration of Tottenham and meet the objectives of the GotHR programme which include improving the image and perception of Tottenham, generating increased footfall, and delivering a more attractive and vibrant High Road with restored historic buildings and attractions.
- 4.2 The project will deliver the following outcomes:
 - The sensitive restoration of a building of architectural merit within the Tottenham Green Conservation Area.
 - The creation of unique new venue and space along the High Road.
 - The establishment of a new business in Tottenham, and associated jobs, training and apprenticeship opportunities.
 - The activation of a traditionally quieter area of the High Road, between Tottenham Green and Bruce Grove.
 - Reinforce the role of the High Road as a destination, increasing its vitality and viability
 - Economic benefits from the letting of the premises and associated rent and business rates payments.

5. Alternative options considered

- 5.1. A do nothing option would mean leaving the building as it is. This would not support the objectives of bringing the building back into use and contributing to the physical, social and economic regeneration of the area. The building also attracts some antisocial behaviour in the form of street drinkers to the rear of the site and this proposal would make the building public and more of a destination, therefore increasing natural surveillance of the area.
- 5.2. Instead of retaining the freehold and leasing the building to an operator the Council could sell the building freehold and have no involvement in its future use, other than in relation to any regulatory decisions (such as Planning and Licensing). This is not recommended as due to its strategic location on the High Road, architectural merit and cultural significance, and its potential to contribute to the regeneration of Tottenham. Therefore it is considered that a degree of

protection and certainty is required over its future use and operation which would be difficult to achieve if it was sold on a freehold basis.

- 5.3. The feasibility study explored a number of different uses for the building including a residential unit, community space, office and reinstating it as a public toilet. These options were not considered feasible (more information is provided in section 6.6). It is also considered that the building should be open to the public in the future given its previous use and history. A cafe/bar would achieve this aim.

6. Background information

Site Context

- 6.1 The site is situated at the junction of Monument Way and Tottenham High Road, facing the High Road. Internally the layout comprises segregated male and female toilets and sinks. The site is equidistant from Bruce Grove and Seven Sisters stations (around a 10mn walk to each) and close to the community and civic buildings at Tottenham Green. There are a number of local shops and business nearby on the High Road. Tottenham Chances is located opposite the building. Rawlinson Terrace is locally listed and includes a row of housing, a solicitor's office, and a former synagogue which is no longer in use.
- 6.2 The building is a local landmark of architectural merit. The Tottenham Area Action Plan (Regulation 19, 2016) states that the building makes a positive contribution to the High Road and that it should be conserved and protected, also stating that opportunities for its repair and sustainable use should be sought. Any future use of the building must ensure that its attractive exterior and aesthetic is retained, and better maintained, and that sensitive conversion and alterations are carried out.

Architectural Feasibility Study

- 6.3 In October 2014, as part of the GotHR programme, the Council commissioned Adams & Sutherland architects to complete a feasibility study of the building and the surrounding public realm to explore options for its future use and establish the work needed to bring it back into use.
- 6.4 The vision for the site as set out in the feasibility study is as follows:

An open and sensitive approach to converting the existing building combined with a boldly refigured adjacent public realm creates a flexible means of bringing new life to this unused building and its surroundings, supporting the wider regeneration of Tottenham High Road. The project improves the surrounding town centre, activates a quieter area of the High Road, creates a unique place and destination, which reinforces the specific character of Tottenham, and brings an unused historic and locally significant building back into use.

- 6.5 The feasibility study considered the following uses for the building: residential unit, office/studio, community building/hall, toilet, retail unit and cafe/bar. For each use a proposed internal layout was prepared and the use was considered in the context of the site, the vision, relevant planning policy, and the regeneration programme for Tottenham.

- 6.6 Based on the findings of the study it is proposed that a cafe/bar use is most appropriate given that it best meets the vision for the site, the relative ease of converting the building into this type of use, its location on the High Road, financial sustainability (the operator will be required to fund fit out costs), the ability to return an income stream to the Council, and the fact that a cafe/bar would make the building open and accessible to the community and maximise opportunities for appreciation of the buildings history and heritage. A common issue raised throughout public consultation was the loss of public toilets. However there have been no public toilets available at this site for a long period of time and there is no Council funding to refurbish or maintain the buildings as public toilets.
- 6.7 The feasibility study also proposed a range of works to the building required to bring it back into use. These include; removing internal partitions and toilet fixtures, replace damaged roof tiles, replace damaged guttering, repair external timber and brick panels, and reinstate windows and doors. Funding is currently available for some of these repair and enabling works.
- 6.8 As well as the works to the building itself the feasibility study proposed changes to the public realm around the site to further enhance the building and its setting. This would involve the removal of some of the Council owned car parking bays to the rear of the site and re-landscaping this area as a terraced area to be able to be used by the building. These works are estimated to cost around £65,000. There is currently no funding available to deliver the public realm works however it is proposed that funding sources will continue to be explored. An element of the revenue stream from the commercial use of the building could be apportioned to deliver and/or maintain the public realm improvements in the future.

Public consultation

- 6.9 Following the completion of the feasibility study public consultation was carried out on the proposals in December 2015. The proposals were advertised on the Haringey Council website, a press release was issued and the consultation was also promoted via the Council's social media platforms. Leaflets were also distributed to all of the properties along Rawlinson Terrace.
- 6.10 Public drop in sessions were held at the Tottenham Winter festival on the 5th December and Brook Street Chapel on the 10th December. An architectural model of the building was available to view and Regeneration Officers were present to discuss the proposals. 82% of the feedback at these sessions was positive and supportive of the future use of the building as a cafe/bar, and the associated building and public realm designs. An on the street survey was also undertaken on the afternoon of the 13th January 2016 near to the building, 86% of those who were able to stop and discuss the proposals responded positively to the idea.
- 6.11 A common issue raised throughout consultation was the loss of public toilets. However there have been no public toilets available at this site for a long period of time and there is no Council funding to deliver or maintain this use in the long term. However based on the feedback received the feasibility of the Community Toilet Scheme in Tottenham will be explored. This is an initiative where local high street businesses allow their toilets to be used by the public and is advertised by stickers in the windows of participating premises. This will be taken forward

separately from this report but if it goes ahead the operator of Monument Way toilets would be expected to participate in the scheme. This will be a requirement of the letting criteria.

Securing an operator

6.12 The recommended use for the building is a cafe/bar (Use Class A3 or A4). A lease will be granted by the Council to the successful operator. Due to its prominence on the High Road and the architectural significance of the building, the site is likely to attract significant commercial interest when advertised. This has been confirmed already by the large number of speculative enquiries received regarding the site.

6.13 The letting advert will contain a set of criteria that the operator will need to meet which will include the following:

- The operator must propose an A3 or A4 Use Class for the building (cafe/bar use).
- Any future changes to the Use Class of the building, including under Permitted Development, must be agreed in writing by the Council.
- An independent operator is required (as opposed to a chain retailer/operator). Given the unique character and heritage of the building this approach is considered best suited and most appropriate for the site.
- The operator/business should provide local employment opportunities as well as opportunities for apprenticeships, work experience and training.
- Opportunities to showcase community arts, and hold events associated with creative/arts groups and creative studios in Tottenham, will be encouraged alongside the principal use in order to encourage a range of community activities in the building.
- The Adams and Sutherland designs will be shared with the successful operator and the operator must sympathetically preserve and enhance the architectural features of the building in line with these proposals. In addition to any planning application or building control process any proposed works should be discussed and agreed by the Council (Tottenham Regeneration and Property) in advance.
- Other than the initial Council capital investment proposed in this report, the operator will be expected to fund the fit out works for their operation. They will have the opportunity to submit an application to the Tottenham Opportunity Investment Fund (if required).
- All running costs (business rates, bills and utilities) for the business must be met by the operator.
- The operator will be expected to submit a change of use planning application (from D1 Use Class to A3 and/or A4 Use Class).
- The operator will be expected to secure all relevant planning, building control, licensing, highways and food safety approvals and certificates.
- The operator will be expected to design the building in conformity with the proposed public realm works. Solutions to progress the public realm works will be encouraged.
- If a Community Toilet Scheme is progressed in Tottenham the operator/business will be expected to participate.
- Submissions will be encouraged from existing local businesses (based in Tottenham or Haringey).

Capital works

6.14 Architectural designs (RIBA Stage 3 Developed Designs) for the building have been provided by Adams and Sutherland as part of the feasibility study, see Appendix 1. This report proposes initial renovation and enabling works which will maintain the existing aesthetic and structure of the building and ensure the building is ready for an operator to move in to. Three phases of construction works are envisaged:

- Phase 1 Building and fabric repair – Repair and enabling works to ensure the building is cleared ready to offer to a future commercial operator.
- Phase 2 Internal fit out for commercial use – The operator, once selected, will undertake the fit out works so that the building can operate as a cafe/bar.
- Phase 3 Public realm - extend and re-configure the public realm surrounding the building including the removal of some parking bays on Rawlinson Terrace to enhance the area and further facilitate the use of the building.

6.15 A tender process has been undertaken for the phase 1 works. The contractor who submitted the lowest cost will be appointed to undertake the works. These are expected to commence in July 2016. This contract award is the subject of a separate report for authorisation by the Assistant Director of Property and Capital Projects.

7. Contribution to strategic outcomes

As well as contributing positively to the objectives and priorities (specifically the Place and People priorities) in the Tottenham Strategic Regeneration Framework (2014), the project will also contribute to the following strategic outcomes and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan (2015-2018):

- We will work with communities to improve the environment, particularly by reducing anti-social behaviour and environmental crime.
- We will make our streets, parks and estates clean, well maintained and safe.
- We will deliver growth, by creating an environment that supports investment and growth in business and jobs.
- We will focus growth by prioritising new homes and jobs in Wood Green and particularly in Tottenham, where need and opportunity are greatest, and by bringing some of the borough's key community assets into more active use.

8. Statutory Officers comments (Chief Finance Officer (including procurement), Assistant Director of Corporate Governance, Equalities)

8.1. Finance

Revenue funding of £49,000 is available for this project within Tottenham's revenue reserves and an additional £20,000 from the Tottenham revenue budget. A further £21,309 is available from GLA's Growth on the High Road funding. Therefore there is currently sufficient funding available to undertake the initial capital works.

It is expected that a building operator will fund the internal fit out costs. The external public realm works, though desirable, do not need to proceed at this point. Funding must be secured before proceeding with the subsequent phases of this project.

8.2. Procurement

Not applicable.

8.3. Legal

The Assistant Director of Corporate Governance notes the contents of the report and is not aware of any legal reasons preventing the Cabinet Member from approving the recommendations in the report.

8.4 Equality

The Council has a public sector equality duty under the Equalities Act (2010) to have due regard to:

- Tackle discrimination and victimisation of persons that share the characteristics protected under S4 of the Act. These include the characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (formerly gender) and sexual orientation;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share those protected characteristics and people who do not;
- Foster good relations between people who share those characteristics and people who do not

This restoration project supports the wider work in Tottenham Green and the High Street to enhance the public realm and strengthen existing assets and the physical character of the area. The enhancements should be enjoyable for all residents and groups of people visiting the area. The aim is for the project to also benefit locally run businesses by increasing footfall to the High Street.

As the building is presently disused, the plans to convert the old toilet block into a commercial cafe/bar will not result in any reduced access to public toilets in the area. The building is not in the immediate proximity of residential dwellings, and therefore minimum disruption is expected from the restoration work or operation of a cafe/bar on the site.

Any successful contractor for the design and restoration work will be expected to adhere to equalities considerations, including ease of accessibility for elderly, disabled and pushchairs to the restored vicinity.

9. Use of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Adams and Sutherland architectural designs

10. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

Not applicable