

Disposal of the former public conveniences, Silverton

Cabinet Member: Councillor Ray Stanley
Responsible Officer: Head of Housing & Property Services

Reason for Report: To advise Cabinet of the capital market value of the former public conveniences at Silverton and the alternatives for disposal.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

1. That the Head of Housing & Property Services be authorised to dispose of the former public conveniences to Room4U for the provision of a health and well-being centre in the consideration of:
 - a) £30,000, to include the provision of an externally accessible unisex toilet,
or
 - b) £50,000, without the provision of an externally accessible unisex toilet;

and

2. That should the sale not be completed by 31 March 2016, the Head of Housing & Property Services market and sell the conveniences on the open market.

Relationship to the Corporate Plan: Empowering our communities by providing support for older people, including working with voluntary and community groups.

Financial Implications: A reduced capital receipt may result in the reduction of the Capital Programme or additional borrowing.

Legal Implications: Approval to dispose of the former public conveniences is acceptable under the general disposal consent if Members are satisfied that the sale would promote both social well-being and environmental well-being for the Silverton area.

Risk Assessment: None arising from this report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Silverton Parish Council entered into a lease with the District Council in November 2009 with provision for the Parish Council to restore the public convenience and develop one part of the building for commercial use.
- 1.2 Neither of those proposed developments had taken place by October 2012. Subsequently, the Parish Council surrendered the lease and the premises reverted back to the District Council in early 2013.

- 1.3 A valuation was commissioned in February 2013 which assessed the capital value of the freehold interest in the premises with vacant possession, to include two adjacent car parking spaces, in the sum of £80,000 (assuming planning consent is available for residential development/redevelopment).
- 1.4 This valuation was updated in June 2015 to £83,000.
- 1.5 Advice received from the Planning service has suggested that residential development would not be out of the question.
- 1.6 Capital receipts are normally the first resource for funding of our future Capital Programme and any reduction may result in either a reduced programme or additional borrowing.

2.0 **Current position**

- 2.1 Between November 2013 and January 2014, the Room4U group was formed and constituted with an aim to provide a place for older people that would provide a warm and friendly environment for the following activities:
 - A range of health and well-being activities
 - Social opportunities to reduce issues of social isolation and access to information
 - Access to complementary therapies
- 2.2 The aim of this group is to convert the former public toilet to comprise a multi-purpose, private, comfortable room for a range of small group activities, as well as one-to-one consultations, a kitchen area and a publicly accessible disabled toilet with separate entrance.
- 2.3 An application for a District Council seed fund grant from community grant funding was submitted which was successful, subject to conditions, over a 3-year period.
- 2.4 The group has also received numerous donations, in addition to the fund raising events that it has arranged, and has documented support from the local community.

3.0 **Considerations**

- 3.1 The District Council could decide to sell the premises on the open market, assuming that planning consent is available for residential development/redevelopment, and use the capital receipt for the Council's Capital Programme.
- 3.2 Alternatively, the Council could decide to dispose of the former public conveniences, excluding the two adjacent parking spaces, for less than market value, if satisfied that the sale would promote both social and

environmental well-being for the Silverton area. Any subsequent receipt could still be used for the Capital Programme.

- 3.3 It should be noted that the previous arrangements took a number of months/years to conclude. It is therefore thought appropriate that a realistic timeframe to deal with the 'less than market value' sale is time limited, which would allow the Council to proceed with an open market sale if required without further delays.

4.0 **Conclusion**

4.1 The Room4U group has been actively fund raising and has received donations and has documented support from the local community, as well as other local organisations.

4.2 The group is currently applying for charitable status and has been promised seed funding for the project.

4.3 Therefore, the Head of Housing & Property Services recommends that:

4.3.1 **he be authorised to dispose of the former public conveniences to Room4U for the provision of a health and wellbeing centre in consideration of:**

- a) **£30,000, to include the provision of an externally accessible unisex toilet, or**
- b) **£50,000 without the provision of an externally accessible unisex toilet; and**

4.3.2 **the should the sale not be completed by 31 March 2016, he market and sell the conveniences on the open market.**

Contact for more information: Nick Sanderson – 01884 234960
nsanderson@middevon.gov.uk

Background Papers: Valuation document (6 March 2013), Room4U presentation document

Circulation of the Report: Cllr Ray Stanley, Management Team