

## REPORT TO CABINET

<b>Part Open and Part Exempt</b>		Would any decisions proposed :			
<b>Any especially affected Wards</b>	Mandatory/	Be entirely within Cabinet's powers to decide		YES/NO	
	Discretionary /	Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO	
	Operational	Is it a Key Decision		YES/NO	
Lead Member: Cllr Simon Ring E-mail: cllr.simon.ring@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:			
		Other Members consulted:			
Lead Officer: Duncan Hall E-mail: Duncan.hall@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616445		Other Officers consulted: CEO, S151, Monitoring Officer, Project Officer, Cultural Officer, Regeneration Programmes Manager, Principle Project Manager, Assistant Director Regeneration, Housing and Place, Strategic Finance Business Partner (Projects).			
Financial Implications YES	Policy/ Personnel Implications YES	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equality Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications YES/NO	Environmental Considerations YES
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is paragraph 3.					

Date of meeting: 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2026

### CUSTOM HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

#### Summary

This report seeks Cabinet approval to proceed with letting the contract for refurbishment works to the Custom House, a key element of the Riverfront Regeneration Town Deal Project.

The Custom House works seek to deliver sensitive refurbishment and restoration of the Grade I listed building and surrounding quayside. This will include new accessibility interventions such as a platform lift and accessible toilet, increased and upgraded toilets, kitchenette facilities, office spaces, compliant fire escape route, and enhancements to Purfleet Quay including power connections and upgraded lighting. A sensitive programme of structural repairs and refurbishment to the building are also proposed. These interventions will allow the currently underutilised building to be brought back into flexible use in line with the Business Case and aims of the Town Deal Board.

This report also provides an update on the preferred option of the Business Plan and proposed operating model for the Custom House.

The recommended option set out in the report will ensure the scheme can progress in accordance with the revised Town Deal timeframes and provides

confirmation of the cost to deliver the works, in line with the vision in the Town Investment Plan.

## **Recommendation**

### Cabinet Resolves:

1. To proceed with the Custom House element of the Riverfront Regeneration project based on the RIBA Stage 4 design.
2. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place to award the contract to deliver the Custom House Project (“the Main Contract”) to the successful tenderer, as identified through the completed procurement process within the approved budget as authorised.
3. Delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder to approve material changes to the scope of the project and/or variations to the Main Contract that are within the approved budget and in accordance with the Local Assurance Framework for this project.

## **Reason for Decision**

To approve the letting of the contract for Custom House works, which will allow the works to be completed in line with Towns Fund timescales and support the Council’s corporate strategy policy to promote growth & prosperity.

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. The Riverfront Regeneration is one of a number of projects agreed to proceed by the King’s Lynn Town Board (now called the Neighborhood Board) under the Town Deal for King’s Lynn. Achieving this growth through enhancing the cultural offer forms one of the key components of the Town Investment Plan (2021). The Towns Fund Programme seeks to enhance visitor appeal for the town centre and additionally help reactivate underutilised valuable heritage assets.
- 1.2. The proposed works to the **Custom House** and **Purfleet Quay** are integral components of the broader **Riverfront Regeneration Project**. This initiative seeks to promote long-term economic, social, and environmental sustainability along King’s Lynn’s historic waterfront through a strategic, phased programme of renewal. The programme consists of the following key workstreams:

1.2.1. **South Quay: Provision of Dryside Facilities** - Development is currently underway to provide Dryside facilities for visitors at the South Quay. This phase is on schedule for completion in July 2026.

1.2.2. **The Custom House: Refurbishment** - The project aims to revitalise the Custom House, ensuring this landmark heritage asset is open and accessible to the public. The regeneration will enable the building to support a more diverse and flexible range of uses than its currently allows.

1.3. The Custom House is a Grade I listed building of national importance. The site is in private ownership, with the Council holding a long-term full repairing and insuring lease on the building. The building owner has been engaged throughout the project and is supportive of the plans. A process to vary the existing lease- granting permission via a license for the proposed works without the obligation to re-instate is ongoing and is expected to be concluded in time to let the works contract. Contracts will not be entered into until this lease variation has been completed.

## 2. REFURBISHMENT WORKS

2.1 The Custom House refurbishment works include:

- Installation of a platform lift to the first floor.
- Creation of an accessible toilet on the ground floor.
- Removal of modern concrete flood defense that blocks view of the historic south door and replacement with drop in flood defense (this element is subject to agreement from the Environmental Agency).
- Re-positioning of cleaner's cupboard and sluice sink.
- Removal of unused 1990's built in furniture and broken interpretation cabinets.
- A new compliant fire escape route to the front door from the upper floors.
- Creation of a new storage space on the first floor.
- Upgraded and increased toilets on the second floor.
- Refurbishment of the two offices spaces on the second floor.
- A new kitchenette on the second floor.
- Upgrade of the electric, lighting, heating, security and fire alarm systems.
- Repairs to stonework.
- Repairs to windows and doors.
- Roof and cupola repairs.
- Structural repairs.
- Repairs and re-decoration throughout.
- New electrical provision on Purfleet Quay to allow pop up activities.
- Upgrades to the lighting along Purfleet Quay.

2.2 The works have been carefully designed to ensure that as much historic fabric as possible is retained while still delivering interventions that will allow the building to function as a flexible, accessible space open to the public.

### 3. PROCUREMENT

- 3.1. A compliant procurement process is being undertaken for the appointment of a contractor to deliver the Custom House restoration works, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Standing Orders (2025).
- 3.2. At the Invitation to Tender (ITT) stage, bidders were required to provide detailed proposals, including method statements, heritage conservation techniques, approach to risk management, programme, quality assurance, social value commitments, and a fully priced cost submission. Clarification questions were managed throughout the process to ensure consistency, transparency, and equal treatment of all participants.
- 3.3. Tenders will be evaluated in accordance with the pre-published criteria, using a quality/price evaluation model designed to secure Best Value. The evaluation panel will include officers from Procurement, Project Delivery and the Design Team.
- 3.4. Following evaluation and moderation, a preferred bidder will be identified, based on quality, heritage methodology, price, and overall deliverability of the required works. Due diligence checks, including financial standing assessments and verification of technical references, will be completed to confirm that the preferred contractor is capable of delivering the project.
- 3.5. Subject to Cabinet approval, the Council will award and execute the works contract in line with the project programme. The JCT Intermediate Building Contract will be administered by Pulse Consult Ltd, who provide project management and contract administration services for the wider project.

### 4. BUSINESS PLAN - UPDATE

- 4.1. In September 2022 Cabinet asked that an update was brought to a future meeting setting out the proposed business plan for the Custom House. This report sets out the Custom House business plan and the approved preferred operating model option. **See Appendix 1, 2, 3 & 4- EXEMPT**
- 4.2. The Custom House refurbishment is a cornerstone of the Riverfront Regeneration Project, prioritising cultural revitalisation and accessibility over commercial profit. The project secures the building's future while fundamentally transforming accessibility. The installation of a platform lift and accessible toilet will, for the first time, remove long-standing physical barriers to this historic landmark.
- 4.3. The vision transforms the Custom House into an upgraded, accessible cultural facility. Featuring a 'cafe-lite' on the ground floor, with space for art exhibitions and occasional public and private hire. Additionally, the plan envisions the first floor dedicated to high-quality interpretation detailing King's Lynn's heritage, focusing on periods of history which have been designed to be complementary to other heritage sites within the borough.

- 4.4. The projected footfall assumes the inclusion of a first-floor interpretive experience; while the current project scope delivers the essential infrastructure, repairs and amenities, the full visitor experience and its associated attendance targets will be realised as supplementary funding is secured to complete the interpretive experience.
- 4.5. This preferred option was endorsed by the Riverfront Regeneration Project Board and the King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board in May 2025.
- 4.6. The Borough Council currently incurs annual operational and maintenance costs for the building— see **exempt information 17.3** for further details. The Business Plan projects a modest annual income to cover existing running costs and provide a surplus. However, it must be noted that this financial model remains subject to:
- Lease Negotiations: As part of the licence for the work, a rent review discussion is taking place with the building owner. While this will impact the specific figures within the Business Plan (which used current rental values at the time of writing), the existing lease contains covenants limiting percentage increases which will lessen the impact. For details **see exempt item 17.1**
  - Funding Requirements: Delivery of the full income-generating model is dependent on securing the additional capital funding required for the first-floor interpretation experience. These funding options are currently being explored.
- 4.7. An updated Economic Case for the programme shows a Benefit-Cost Ratio (BCR) of 1.5, within acceptable 'value for money' limits. The BCR accounts for outputs related to the wider Riverfront Regeneration project, including the creation of the Dryside Facilities. See **Appendix 5 FEI Custom House Economic Case EXEMPT**.
- 4.8. Development of the operating model is ongoing. Officers will progress the operational framework and identify the most appropriate delivery mechanism, whether managed internally or through an external partner. This work will ensure the final model aligns with original business case assumptions— specifically that no additional revenue costs are incurred beyond the existing budgetary baseline.

## 5. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1. CUSTOM HOUSE REFURBISHMENT (RECOMMENDED) - Cabinet is recommended to approve the contract award for the Custom House works. This option is recommended as it achieves the following:
- Compliance & Safety: Mitigates significant legal and safety risks by bringing the building into full fire safety and regulatory compliance.
  - Accessibility & Inclusion: Delivers essential improvements to ensure the site is accessible to all users, meeting statutory equality objectives.

- Heritage Preservation: Safeguards a Grade I listed asset of national importance, addressing priority repairs to prevent escalating maintenance liabilities.
- Economic & Cultural Growth: Unlocks flexible spaces for cultural, community, and commercial activities, fulfilling the aims of the Town's Cultural and Heritage Strategy.
- Financial Security: Secures external Town Deal investment by ensuring delivery before the March 2028 deadline, protecting the Council's reputation with national funders.

5.2. Alternative Options - Alternative "interventionist" designs were rejected by statutory and community stakeholders. The recommended approach provides the optimal balance: sensitive interventions and repairs to preserve the historic fabric while creating a sustainable accessible space for current and future use.

Failure to progress would leave the Council with long-term financial liabilities for an underutilised, non-compliant building and result in the loss of secured external funding.

## 6. Project Programme

6.1. Subject to Cabinet decisions taken in this report, and the successful completion of the re-negotiation of the lease arrangements (see exempt item 16.1), the key dates and programme for the Custom House element of the project are set out below:

<b>Tender Return Deadline</b>	Monday 30th March 2026, 12:00 noon
<b>Anticipated interviews dates (if required)</b>	w/c 13th April 2026
<b>Anticipated Contract Award</b>	6th May 2026
<b>Anticipated Contract Period</b>	May 2026 to April 2027

## Appendix 6 Riverfront Regeneration, Custom House Project Chronology

### 7. Governance Arrangements

7.1. The governance of the Towns Fund Riverfront Regeneration project operates within a robust, multi-layered governance framework, centred on:

- King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board – strategic oversight, approvals & direction,
- BCKLWN (Accountable Body & Lead Authority) – financial accountability, officer support, project delivery
- Programme Boards / Sub-groups – operational oversight and reporting
- Senior Responsible Officer & Council Delivery Teams – implementation and monitoring
- Consultation & engagement mechanisms – informing design and future use

7.2. All processes are governed by the published Local Assurance Framework and latest government guidance.

## 8. Policy Implications

The project aligns with the following corporate policies.

- The Riverfront Regeneration Project aligns with the following policies:
- BCKLWN Corporate Strategy 2023-2027
- King's Lynn Town Investment Plan (2020)
- Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Local Plan Review (2016-36)
- King's Lynn Public Realm Action Plan
- West Norfolk Tourism Development Plan (TDP) (2022-2026)
- BCKLWN Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2021-24)
- BCKLWN King's Lynn Riverfront Delivery Plan (2017)
- BCKLWN St Margaret's Area Conservation Area Character Statement (revised 2008)
- Cultural and Heritage Strategy for King's Lynn (2025)

## 9. Financial Implications

9.1. The total projected cost for the Town Deal Riverfront Regeneration programme is £3.23m. Following the approval of an additional £0.35m in February 2026 to align the budget with forecasted expenditure, the project is now fully funded.

9.2. Funding Composition - The £3.23m budget is comprised of the following secured funding streams:

Funding Source	Amount
Town Deal Funding	£2.77m
Internal BCKLWN Funding	£0.35m
Other Grants	£0.11m
Total Project Budget	£3.23m

Please see table below with forecasted costs, funding and cashflow timings:

Riverfront Project Actuals, Forecast & Funding				
Description	Actuals to Feb-26	Forecast Mar-26	Forecast 26-27	Works Total
Main Works	£1,124,140	£116,372	£1,689,882	£2,930,394
Client Contingency	£0	£0	£300,000	£300,000
<b>Capital Works</b>	<b>£1,124,140</b>	<b>£116,372</b>	<b>£1,989,882</b>	<b>£3,230,394</b>
Townsfund Funding	£1,124,140	£116,372	£1,533,431	£2,773,943
BCKLWN Funding			£350,000	£350,000
Other			£106,451	£106,451
<b>Funding</b>	<b>£1,124,140</b>	<b>£116,372</b>	<b>£1,989,882</b>	<b>£3,230,394</b>

## 10. Personnel Implications

- 10.1. The delivery team, comprising both internal staff and external professional services, is fully in place. This integrated team—including project management, cost consultancy, and architectural design—is funded through the project budget to support the upcoming construction phases.
- 10.2. A newly appointed Heritage Volunteer Coordinator will recruit a cohort of volunteers for the Council's heritage sites. This will include the Custom House, providing the necessary support to facilitate the building's opening and operation.

## 11. Environmental Considerations

- 11.1. One of the primary objectives of the Towns Fund is to promote clean growth investment to deliver decarbonisation, improved air quality, health benefits and stimulate economic growth. The Towns Fund business case sought to address these issues with further consideration given to these themes during the development of the detailed design of the Custom House project, within the constraints of the listed building. This includes an upgrade of the current heating and electrical system.

## 12. Statutory Considerations

- 12.1. The project has complied with the necessary requirements of the Local Planning Authority for Listed Building Consent.
- 12.2. The listed building application received approval in December 2025. The listed buildings consent had a number of conditions, that will be discharged ahead of start on site or the full site opening date.
- 12.3. The development of the RIBA Stage 4 Design complies with the latest regulations, to ensure the recommended option complies with Fire and Building

Regulations and also includes major access improvements across the site for the public and staff, within the constraints of the listed building. Currently access to the Custom House do not meet the latest building regulations and are prohibitive to a range of wheelchair and pushchair users and those with mobility issues.

### **13. Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)**

(Pre screening report template attached)

### **14. Risk Management Implications**

- 14.1. Effective risk management is an essential component of the delivery of the Riverfront Regeneration project and is embedded within the wider King's Lynn Town Deal governance framework. The Town Deal Local Assurance Framework (LAF) sets out explicit requirements for risk monitoring, reporting, and escalation across all Towns Fund projects, including Riverfront Regeneration.

### **Appendix 7 Riverfront Regeneration Risk Register EXEMPT**

### **15. Declarations of Interest / Dispensations Granted**

- 15.1. None

### **16. Background Papers**

Local Assurance Framework

King's Lynn Town Deal- Riverfront Regeneration Business Case 2022 [riverfront regeneration towns fund business case final 290922](#)

Town Deal Cabinet Report, 24 August 2021

Town Deal Update Cabinet Report 8 June 2022

Culture and Heritage Strategy 2025 [Culture | Culture | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk](#)

King's Lynn Town Deal Board papers available on [www.visionkingslynn.com](http://www.visionkingslynn.com)

Town Investment Plan [King's Lynn Town Investment Plan - February 2021](#)

#### **Appendices list:**

- Appendix 1: FEI Custom House Business plan and Options Appraisal EXEMPT**
- Appendix 2: FEI Custom House Business plan Financial Assumptions EXEMPT**
- Appendix 3: FEI Custom House Catering Report Turpin Smale EXEMPT**
- Appendix 4: FEI Custom House Income and Expenditure Options EXEMPT**
- Appendix 5: FEI Custom House Economic Case EXEMPT**
- Appendix 6: Riverfront Regeneration Custom House Project Chronology**
- Appendix 7: Riverfront Regeneration Risk Register EXEMPT**

## Stage 1 - Pre-Screening Equality Impact Assessment

For equalities profile information please visit [Norfolk Insight - Demographics and Statistics - Data Observatory](#)

Name of policy/service/function	Regeneration & Economic Development: Riverfront Regeneration Town Deal Project				
Is this a new or existing policy/service/function? ( <i>tick as appropriate</i> )	New		Existing	X	
Brief summary/description of the main aims of the policy/service/function being screened.  Please state if this policy/service is rigidly constrained by statutory obligations, and identify relevant legislation.	The letting of contract for works at the Custom House as part of the wider Riverfront Regeneration Project as part of the Town Deal and approval of the business plan to operate the building.				
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only ( <i>identify stakeholders consulted with</i> )	King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board				
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>				
<p><b>1.</b> Is there any reason to believe that the policy/service/function could have a specific impact on people from one or more of the following groups, for example, because they have particular needs, experiences, issues or priorities or in terms of ability to access the service?</p> <p>Please tick the relevant box for each group. NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.</p> <p><b><i>If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required.</i></b></p> <p><i>*For more information on health inequalities please visit <a href="#">The King's Fund</a></i></p>		Positive	Negative	Neutral	Unsure
	Age			X	
	Disability	X			
	Sex			X	
	Gender Re-assignment			X	
	Marriage/civil partnership			X	
	Pregnancy & maternity			X	
	Race			X	
	Religion or belief			X	
	Sexual orientation			X	
	Armed forces community			X	
	Care leavers			X	
	Health inequalities*			X	
Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)			X		
<b>Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:</b>					
The letting of the contract for works at the Custom House will include installation of accessibility improvements. A platform lift to the first floor and an accessible toilet will be sensitively installed, this will have a positive impact on members of the public and staff with mobility issues and disabilities who will be able to visit the building and attend events.					

Question	Answer	Comments
<del>2. Is the proposed policy/service likely to affect relations between certain equality communities or to damage relations between the equality communities and the Council, for example because it is seen as favouring a particular community or denying opportunities to another?</del>	<del>No</del>	<del>No, this proposal is not likely to affect or damage relations between certain equality communities.</del>
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No	No, the proposal can be seen as a positive to all communities who visit the Custom House.
<p><b>If 'yes' to questions 2 - 3 a full impact assessment will be required unless comments are provided to explain why this is not felt necessary:</b></p> <p><b>Decision agreed by EWG member: .....</b></p>		
4. Are any impacts identified above minor and if so, can these be eliminated or reduced by minor actions? If yes, please agree actions with a member of the Corporate Equalities Working Group and list agreed actions in the comments section	Yes / No	<b>Actions:</b>
		<b>Actions agreed by EWG member:</b> .....
5. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No	<p><b>Please provide brief summary:</b></p> <p>The works are not specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination, but will have a positive impact in terms of the accessibility for those with disabilities.</p>
<b>Assessment completed by:</b>		
<b>Name</b>	Abigail Rawlings	
<b>Job title</b>	Project Officer	
<b>Date completed</b>	27.02.2026	
<b>Reviewed by EWG member</b>		<b>Date</b>

✓ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy ([corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk))