REPORT TO CABINET

Borough Council of
King's Lynn &
West Norfolk

DATE OF MEETING	13th October 2026
REPORT TITLE	Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse
LEAD MEMBER	Cllr Simon Ring, Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Business and Culture
LEAD OFFICER	Jemma Curtis, Regeneration Programmes Manager
CONSULTEES	Section 151 Officer, Monitoring Officer, Corporate Projects, Property Services, Conservation Team, Historic England
WARDS AFFECTED	St Margarets with St Nicholas

KEY DECISION	NO
DECISION MAKER	Cabinet
IS THE REPORT OPEN OR EXEMPT	EXEMPT If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify this are paragraph three.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	YES
HR IMPLICATIONS	NO
POLICY IMPLICATIONS	NO
STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS	YES
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	NO
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS	NO
EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT COMPLETED	Pre-screening completed.

SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report seeks Cabinet approval to accept a grant award offer from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Capital Fund to support the regeneration of the Grade II Listed Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse on South Quay, King's Lynn.

The project will undertake essential repair, conservation and enabling works to bring the vacant historic building into a safe and usable shell condition, safeguarding a significant heritage asset and facilitating its future occupation and long-term sustainable use.

Acceptance of the grant award requires the Borough Council to provide match funding of £250,000 from the Council's Capital Programme 2026-2028. The Council's contribution will leverage significant external investment into West Norfolk, support regeneration objectives, protect an important heritage asset and enable future commercial and community uses.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet resolves to:

1) Accept the Historic England Heritage at Risk Capital Grant award offer of £902,227 for the Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse Project.

2) Approve the project to Tier 1 in the Borough Council's Capital Programme 2026-2028

3) Approve £250,000 as match funding for the project to be met from earmarked reserves.

4) Authorise the Assistant Director for Regeneration, Housing and Place, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, to enter into all necessary funding agreements and associated consents and contractual documentation to progress to project delivery.

REASON FOR DECISION

The decision will enable the Council to secure external grant funding, safeguard a nationally important heritage asset, prevent further deterioration of the building, support regeneration objectives for King's Lynn and unlock future investment and occupation opportunities for the site.

CORPORATE STRATEGY
How does this proposal support our Corporate Priorities Our priorities | Corporate Strategy 2023 - 2027 | Borough Council of King's Lynn & West Norfolk

Promote growth and prosperity to benefit West Norfolk	The project will support regeneration of King's Lynn's riverfront, attract future private investment, increase visitor activity and support economic growth. The project is a further step forward in our heritage led regeneration to support the economic vitality of the town centre. It represents the next phase of regeneration to the riverfront, building on the current investment including the Dryside facilities located within the adjacent annexe building, land a Devil's Alley adjacent to the site, ongoing works at Custom House as well as St George's Guildhall.
Protect our Environment	Reuse of an existing historic building to the latest environmental standards and represents sustainable development, retains embodied carbon and avoids unnecessary demolition and rebuilding in a sustainable town centre location.
Efficient and effective delivery of our services	The proposal secures significant external funding and maximises public value from Council-owned assets.
Support our communities	The project will bring an important heritage asset back into community use and improve access to heritage, wellbeing and cultural opportunities.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Introduction

1.1. This report seeks approval to accept a grant award of £902,227 from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Capital Fund and to provide £250,000 match funding from the Borough Council's Capital Programme 2026-2028 to support the regeneration of the Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse on South Quay, King's Lynn.

2. Background

2.1. The Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse is a Grade II Listed former warehouse located on South Quay, King's Lynn, within the King's Lynn Conservation Area. The building is currently not in use because its condition, layout and lack of modern building infrastructure prevent safe and viable occupation.

2.2. The Council acquired the property in 2018 as part of its wider regeneration ambitions for the riverfront area. The building was subsequently identified as a priority heritage asset requiring intervention through the King's Lynn Heritage Action Zone programme.

2.3. Essential stabilisation and repair works were undertaken during 2022-23, including roof repairs, repointing, rainwater goods replacement and other measures to ensure the building remained secure and weatherproof. Whilst these works prevented immediate deterioration, the building remains vacant, inaccessible to the public and unsuitable for occupation. The Council has actively sought to secure the building's future through marketing and promotion, including its inclusion in Historic England's Heritage Investment Prospectus in 2025. Despite sustained efforts over several years, no viable redevelopment proposal has emerged. Public investment is therefore needed to realise the site's considerable potential to unlock and preserve an important heritage asset while creating new social, cultural and economic value.

2.4. The Council has worked with conservation specialists and Historic England to develop proposals for further investment and submitted an Expression of Interest application to the Heritage at Risk Capital Fund in April 2026, we were then invited to submit a full application in July 2026. The works required to achieve a usable shell condition have been identified and this project will address these barriers and provide the critical step towards securing a

sustainable long-term use for this important heritage asset through adaptive reuse.

2.5. Historic England has now offered grant funding towards a programme of works intended to bring the building into a usable shell condition capable of meanwhile uses alongside attracting long-term occupation and investment.

3. Proposal

3.1. The proposed project will deliver:

- Further investigations and surveys where required.
- Structural repairs and stabilisation works.
- Repair and conservation of historic building fabric.
- New windows and doors and repair of historic windows, with appropriate replacements where necessary.
- Internal floor repairs and replacement works.
- Access improvements including new stairs.
- Installation of essential building services infrastructure such as heating, water, plumbing and drainage connections.
- Fire safety improvements.
- Recording of historic fabric before and during works.
- Conservation-led repairs using traditional materials and techniques.
- Delivery of community engagement and skills programmes associated with the project.

3.2. The project will restore a landmark building that makes a significant contribution to the character of South Quay and the King's Lynn Conservation Area. Its repair will improve the waterfront, enhance the setting of nearby listed buildings and contribute to a more attractive and welcoming historic environment. Visible investment in the warehouse will demonstrate further confidence in the town and will strengthen civic pride by responding directly to priorities identified through public consultation for the Pride in Place programme and King's Lynn Masterplan.

3.3. The project is designed as an enabling intervention that will allow the building to be used for pop-up and meanwhile uses as well as unlock long-term reuse. The Council is currently exploring occupation by a social enterprise seeking to

create a community and wellbeing-focused hub with wellness activities, flexible workspace, community uses and food and drink provision. While future occupation is subject to separate agreements and fit-out works, the project will create the conditions necessary for this and other opportunities to be progressed and enable sustainable and appropriate use of the building creating opportunities for wider economic, social and cultural benefits.

3.4. Acceptance of the Historic England grant is conditional upon the Council providing £250,000 match funding.

4. Options Considered

4.1. Option 1 - Accept the Grant and Provide Match Funding (Recommended)

This option secures substantial external investment into the borough, protects the heritage asset, supports regeneration objectives, algins with Council policy and facilitates future occupation of the building.

4.2. Option 2 - Decline the Grant Offer

This option would avoid the Council's match funding contribution but would result in the loss of significant external funding and significantly reduce the Council's ability to bring the building back into productive use.

4.3. Option 3 – Delay Acceptance

A delay could result in the withdrawal of grant funding, increased construction costs, further deterioration of the building and lost regeneration opportunities.

5. Financial Implications

5.1. Historic England has offered grant funding towards the delivery of the project subject to receipt of a local contribution. The Grant contribution from Historic England totals: £902,227. Total project costs are £1,152,227.

5.2. The Council is required to provide £250,000 match funding from the Capital Programme 2026-2028, allocated from earmarked reserves.

5.3. Approval of the recommendation will create a capital commitment of £250,000 and will unlock significant external funding that would otherwise not be available to the Council.

5.4. The project represents a strategic investment in a Council-owned asset and is expected to reduce future liabilities associated with deterioration and ongoing maintenance requirements.

6. HR Implications

6.1. There are no direct HR implications arising from this report.

6.2. The project will be delivered using existing staff resources supported by appointed specialist consultants and contractors.

7. Policy Implications

7.1. The proposal supports King's Lynn regeneration objectives including:

7.2. Pride in Place Regeneration Plan (2025).

7.3. Draft King's Lynn Masterplan (2026).

7.4. The project supports the ambitions of the King's Lynn Masterplan and Pride in Place programme by contributing to a more attractive, active and connected waterfront. The project is identified as a short-term ambition (0-5 years) in the emerging King's Lynn Masterplan, where it is recognised as a large and catalytic site within the wider riverfront. Site regeneration has also been identified as a priority through the former Heritage Action Zone and through the King's Lynn Pride in Place Ten-Year Vision.

7.5. Increased activity will generate additional footfall along the waterfront, supporting existing businesses and encouraging further investment in the area. The warehouse is identified as a priority heritage asset, reusing the building will strengthen the southern gateway to the historic waterfront and complement investment at St George's Guildhall, the Custom House, the adjacent Dryside facilities and other regeneration projects across the town. The project also has strong links to the proposed Devil's Alley public realm scheme adjacent to the site. Bringing the warehouse back into use will help

activate these improvements by creating a complementary destination and increasing regular use of the area. In turn, the enhanced public realm will improve the setting and accessibility of the heritage asset creating a more attractive, connected and vibrant waterfront.

7.6. Surveys, research and recording undertaken as part of the works will improve understanding of the building's significance and history. This information will support future interpretation, education and engagement activities, enabling more people to connect with King's Lynn's maritime and industrial heritage.

7.7. Overall, the project will create the conditions for future occupation and investment. Interest has already been expressed by a social enterprise seeking to establish a community and wellbeing-focused hub within the building. While future fit-out works are outside the scope of this scheme, delivering an occupier-ready shell will unlock opportunities for future use and investment, acting as a catalyst for regeneration, investment and community benefit.

7.8. Therefore, the project directly supports delivery of the Council's Corporate Strategy, Corporate Action Plan and wider policy commitments, as set out at the beginning of this report most notably around heritage and conservation, economic growth and town centre regeneration.

8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications and considerations

8.1. The proposal promotes the retention and reuse of an existing historic building, reducing embodied carbon associated with demolition and redevelopment.

8.2. Repairing and bringing the building back into use supports sustainable development principles while contributing towards environmental regeneration of the riverfront area. Bringing the warehouse back towards productive use will strengthen a compact town-centre location accessible by walking, cycling and public transport, reducing reliance on car travel. The building will complement nearby regeneration and public realm projects, including Devil's

Alley, Boal Quay and other waterfront improvements designed to create a greener, better connected environment.

9. Statutory and Legal Implications

9.1. The Council has powers to undertake regeneration, economic development and property improvement activities under the Local Government Act 2000 and Localism Act 2011.

9.2. The project will be delivered in accordance with procurement requirements, grant conditions, listed building requirements and all relevant statutory approvals.

9.3. Legal Services will review and advise on funding agreements and contractual arrangements prior to execution.

10. Local Government Reorganisation Implications

10.1. There are no immediate Local Government Reorganisation implications arising from this report.

10.2. The investment will enhance the value and condition of a strategic public asset and support long-term regeneration objectives irrespective of future governance arrangements.

11. Health and Safety Implications

11.1. The project will improve the safety of the building through structural stabilisation and compliance-related works.

11.2. Construction works will be undertaken in accordance with Construction (Design and Management) Regulations and managed through appropriate project governance arrangements.

12. Consultees

12.1. Key Consultees have included:

- Historic England
- Section 151 Officer
- Monitoring Officer
- Property Services
- Conservation Team
- Regeneration Team

12.2. The project has been shaped by extensive public and stakeholder engagement undertaken with residents, businesses and community organisations through the King's Lynn Pride in Place programme between 2024 and 2026. Feedback identified the warehouse as a priority heritage asset and highlighted its potential to contribute to the regeneration of South

Quay and the wider waterfront. Respondents recognised that the building's vacant and deteriorating condition detracts from the area, while its restoration offers opportunities for community benefit, public access and economic activity. The project is strongly supported through the draft King's Lynn Masterplan. Public consultation identified the reuse of the warehouse as a key opportunity, over 70% of respondents support its redevelopment as a creative, cultural or commercial destination, demonstrating clear public backing for investment and reuse. Formal letters of support were received for the Heritage at Risk Capital Fund application from the King's Lynn Civic Society, King's Lynn Neighbourhood Board and Discover King's Lynn Business Improvement District (BID).

12.3. The building's significance has been recognised nationally through its inclusion in Historic England's 2025 Heritage Investment Prospectus, which identified the warehouse as one of 20 heritage regeneration opportunities across England, giving the site a national profile.

13. Equality Impact Assessment

13.1. A pre-screening Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

13.2. The proposal is expected to have a positive impact by increasing future public access to a heritage asset and expanding opportunities for community use and participation. No adverse impacts have been identified and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not considered necessary.

14. Risk Management Implications

14.1. Key risks include:

Risk	Mitigation
Failure to accept funding within required timescales	Cabinet approval and prompt execution of funding agreements
Cost inflation	Robust project management, contingency allowances and procurement controls in place as part of established Project Management governance.
Unforeseen building condition issues	Detailed surveys and specialist conservation advice
Future occupation not secured	Ongoing engagement with interested operators and marketing opportunities
Further deterioration if project does not proceed	Acceptance of grant and implementation of repair works

15. Conclusion

15.1. The Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse is a significant heritage asset whose long-term future requires further intervention beyond the emergency repair works already completed.

15.2. The Historic England grant award provides an opportunity to secure substantial external investment and accelerate the regeneration of a prominent riverside site. Approval of the required £250,000 match funding contribution will enable the Council to safeguard the building, attract future investment and support wider economic, cultural and community benefits.

15.3. Cabinet is therefore recommended to approve acceptance of the grant award and the associated capital funding contribution allowing the project to commence without delay.

LIST OF APPENDICES
• Appendix 1 - Site Location Plan • Appendix 2 - Project Cost Plan

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS
• Historic England Grant Award Offer Letter • Heritage at Risk Capital Fund Application Summary • King's Lynn Masterplan (May 2026 Draft). • Pride in Place Regeneration Plan. • Historic England Heritage Investment Prospectus 2025

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-Sommerfeld and Thomas			
Is this a new or existing policy/ service/function? ***(tick as appropriate)***	New	X	Existing	

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.**	This Cabinet Report seeks Cabinet approval to accept a grant award offer from Historic England's Heritage at Risk Capital Fund to support the regeneration of the Grade II Listed Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse on South Quay, King's Lynn. The project will undertake essential repair, conservation and enabling works to bring the vacant historic building into a safe and usable shell condition, safeguarding a significant heritage asset and facilitating its use, future occupation and long-term sustainable use. Acceptance of the grant award requires the Borough Council to provide match funding of £250,000 from the Council's Capital Programme 2026-2028. The Council's contribution will leverage significant external investment into West Norfolk, support regeneration objectives, protect an important heritage asset and enable future commercial and community uses.
Who has been consulted as part of the development of the policy/service/function? – new only *(identify stakeholders consulted with)*	Section 12 of above report.

Question	**Answer**				
1. 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? **Please tick the relevant box for each group.** **NB. Equality neutral means no negative impact on any group.**		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	

If potential adverse impacts are identified, then a full Equality Impact Assessment (Stage 2) will be required. ****For more information on health inequalities please visit <u>The King's Fund</u>***	Armed forces community			X	
	Care leavers			X	
	Health inequalities*	X			
	Other (eg low income, caring responsibilities)	X			

Please provide a brief explanation of the answers above:

Public access to the Sommerfeld & Thomas Warehouse is extremely limited. The Grade II Listed building is vacant, inaccessible and unsuitable for public use due to condition, safety concerns and the absence of compliant access, fire safety measures and building services. The project will bring the building into a safe, compliant and usable shell condition capable of supporting long-term occupation. The works will address the key barriers that currently prevent access, including structural issues, fire safety deficiencies and accessibility constraints.

Recording, research and investigation undertaken during the project will inform future interpretation and educational activities, helping people to understand and appreciate an important part of King's Lynn's maritime and industrial heritage. The project complements wider riverfront regeneration initiatives including planned public realm improvements at Devil's Alley, creating stronger connections between the warehouse, South Quay and surrounding public spaces. Together, these improvements will encourage greater use of the waterfront and provide a more welcoming environment for residents and visitors.

The warehouse is located within an area facing significant socioeconomic challenges, with parts of King's Lynn experiencing high levels of deprivation. The project has the potential to improve access to opportunities for groups that can face barriers to participation, including people on lower incomes, older residents, young people and those experiencing social isolation. By creating an accessible and welcoming destination in a central location, the project will support inclusive community engagement, help build confidence and skills, strengthen local networks and connections, and contribute to reducing inequalities in access to cultural, social and economic opportunities.

The use of the building aligns with West Norfolk's Marmot Place ambitions to provide systemic change in the West of Norfolk to improve health equity across all sectors by supporting activities that reduce social isolation, improve wellbeing and increase participation and access to heritage. Connections to nearby green and blue infrastructure, including Boal Quay, Harding's Pits and Devil's Alley, will encourage active travel, outdoor activity and urban growing.

Question	Answer	Comments
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?	No	
3. Could this policy/service be perceived as impacting on communities differently?	No	
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: **Decision agreed by EWG member: ……..**		
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**	N/A	**Actions: N/A** **Actions agreed by EWG member: ……..**
5. Is the policy/service specifically designed to tackle evidence of disadvantage or potential discrimination?	No	**Please provide brief summary:**
Assessment completed by: Name	**Connor Smalls**	
Job title	**Regeneration Programmes Officer**	
Date completed	**16/09/26**	
Reviewed by EWG member	A Demonty	**Date** **21.09.26**
✓ Please tick to confirm completed EIA Pre-screening Form has been shared with Corporate Policy (corporate.policy@west-norfolk.gov.uk)		