

Meeting of:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	Thursday, 17 July 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Place Scrutiny Committee
Report Title:	Purchase of Regeneration Asset
Purpose of Report:	To seek Cabinet approval for the acquisition of a building for regeneration purposes and to approve the use of borrowing to complete the purchase.
Report Owner:	Executive Leader and Cabinet Member for Performance and Resources
Responsible Officer:	Chief Executive
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	<p>Section 151 Officer / Head of Finance</p> <p>Director of Corporate Resources</p> <p>Operational Manager Property Services</p> <p>Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p> <p>Director of Environment and Housing</p> <p>Legal Committee Reports</p> <p>Group Leaders</p>
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for Executive decision by Cabinet
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This report recommends that Cabinet approves the purchase of an empty building in Barry for the economic benefit of the town. • To seek approval to use an existing approved loan to enable the acquisition of the property. • To seek approval to use an existing approved loan to cover associated costs linked to the purchase. • To seek approval to amend the 2025/26 Capital Programme in line the purchase amount. 	

Recommendation

1. That the full detail, contents and recommendations are approved as set out in the Part II Cabinet Report.

Reason for Recommendation

1. To consider the commercially confidential information under Section 12a of the Local Government Act 1972 as set out in the Part II Report and agree recommendations therein.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council had previously secured and is in receipt of a Welsh Government Transforming Towns loan of £1 million to support eligible regeneration activity. The acquisition of this building presents an opportunity to secure a town centre freehold to support Town Centre regeneration in Barry.
- 1.2 While the long-term use of the building is yet to be confirmed, options will be developed and assessed in consultation with partners and the Place Boards, with a further report brought back to Cabinet for decision.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 The acquisition will allow the Council to safeguard the property for public benefit and provide time and space to explore longer-term options, including mixed-use redevelopment, meanwhile uses, or new commercial/community tenancies.
- 2.2 A further report will present preferred long-term options, such as refurbishment, redevelopment, social leasing or asset transfer, subject to business case development.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 The proposal evidences the five ways of working in the following ways:

Long-term

Acquiring the building enables a long-term regeneration approach focused on sustainable economic activity and repurposing vacant space.

Prevention

Acquisition prevents a major retail site becoming derelict and supports the prevention of economic decline and anti-social behaviour in a key location.

Integration

The proposal aligns with the Council's Corporate Plan, Project Zero, the Vale 2030 Strategy, and the wider placemaking framework.

Collaboration

Future options will be developed collaboratively with businesses, local partners, and stakeholders via the Barry and Vale Place Boards.

Involvement

Town centre stakeholders and local residents will be engaged through the placemaking process to help shape future uses of the site.

- 3.2** The proposal contributes to the Council's wellbeing objectives in the following ways:

To support learning, employment and sustainable economic growth

The proposal has the potential to protect and strengthen the Town Centre economy. The resulting project should support footfall, spend and the trading environment.

The proposal will new employment opportunities in the longer term through potential workspace, retail, cultural or community uses.

The proposal demonstrates regeneration investment, supporting long-term town centre renewal and creating conditions for sustainable economic growth.

- 3.3 To protect, enhance and value our environment**

The proposal reduces environmental decline by bringing a vacant building back into use and avoiding long-term dereliction.

4. Climate Change and Nature Implications

- 4.1** While there are no direct climate or nature impacts arising from the purchase itself, future development or refurbishment of the site will need to comply with the Council's climate commitments, including opportunities for energy efficiency, sustainable materials, and biodiversity enhancement, subject to a full assessment at the appropriate stage.
- 4.2** A redevelopment of an existing building like this will support the Council's low carbon ambitions through the opportunity to retrofit and improve building performance in line with the Council's net-zero goals.

5. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 5.1** Loan funding is at 2.15% and is repayable after 5 years.
- 5.2** It is likely that the project will be a candidate for grant funding.

- 5.3** The Council will be liable for the immediate running costs for the building such as rates, security and management, but existing placemaking budgets will be used to temporarily cover these costs until such time that a project and next steps is formulated and agreed by Cabinet.

Employment

- 5.4** No immediate employment considerations

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 5.5** Legal due diligence will be undertaken as part of the acquisition process pre-purchase, including title and structural liabilities. The Council will assume full responsibility for the asset upon completion, including insurance, maintenance and any associated liabilities.
- 5.6** The Council has (a general power under s.120 of the Local Government Act 1972 to acquire by agreement any land for any purpose for which they are authorised by legislation to acquire land, notwithstanding that the land is not immediately required for that purpose; and, until it is required for the purpose for which it was acquired, any land acquired under pursuant to s.120 may be used for the purpose of any of the council's functions] or [power under section 227 Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to acquire by agreement any land it requires to facilitate the carrying out of development, re-development or improvement on or in relation to the land. This power can only be exercised where the Council considers that the development, re-development or improvement is likely to contribute to the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of the area within which it is situated].
- 5.7** The project will sit under the Vale Place board and is likely to then form part of the work of the newly formed Barry Place Board due to the likely end use of the building. An Investment Advisory Panel will advise the Vale Place Board on all business cases, with final decisions being taken by Cabinet in due course.

6. Background Papers

None.