

<b>Henry Blogg Museum, Rocket House Cromer</b>	
<b>Executive Summary</b>	<p>The Rocket House building, a multi-let property with community facilities on Cromer promenade, plays a vital role in public accessibility and local services.</p> <p>Investigations in 2023 &amp; 2024 identified defective subfloor drainage beneath the public conveniences as a major cause of damp, which would have avoided the need for full building tanking. Refurbishment works in early 2025 addressed these isolated issues, but monitoring shows damp persists where the rear wall meets the cliff, requiring further action.</p> <p>Consultants have been engaged to and provided a cost plan amounting to £367,484 for the tanking works and repairs and reinstatement of the internal fabric of the building.</p> <p>Heads of Terms for a new lease with the RNLI are under discussion to support the return of the Henry Blogg Museum and secure the building's long-term use.</p>
<b>Options considered</b>	<p>1. Restore museum to lettable standard and agree heads of terms with RNLI. This will require extensive damp proofing works and repairs to the internal fabric of the building allowing reinstatement of the museum.</p> <p>2. Seek new tenant or alternate use of the museum space. Discounted due to earlier Cabinet decisions seeking the return of the RNLI to the building.</p>
<b>Consultation(s)</b>	<p>RNLI Property team  Cllr Tim Adams – Leader of the Council  Steve Blatch – Chief Executive  Cllr Lucy Shires - Portfolio holder for Finance, Estates and Property Services  Renata Garfoot - Asset Strategy Manager</p>
<b>Recommendations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delegate to the Asset &amp; Property Programme Manager in consultation with the s151 Officer to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake all works set out in the detailed cost plan dated 11 September 2025 as shown in Appendix A.</li> <li>• Delegate to the Estates and Asset Strategy Manager in consultation with the s151 Officer to enter into a lease based on terms listed in Appendix B.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for recommendations</b>	<p>Address the ongoing damp issues within the Rocket House building and implement measures to improve its energy performance to support future letting and sustainability.</p>

	<p>Support the reinstatement of the RNLI Museum in Cromer by ensuring suitable accommodation within the building.</p> <p>To facilitate the Reoccupation of the building and to ensure its use as a key community heritage and visitor asset.</p>
<b>Background papers</b>	<p>Appendix A: Programme of works &amp; Cost plan</p> <p>Appendix B: Summary of proposed lease agreement between NNDC and RNLI.</p> <p>Cabinet reports September 2023 &amp; January 2024.</p>

<b>Wards affected</b>	Cromer Town & Suffield Park
<b>Cabinet member(s)</b>	Cllr Shires, Portfolio Holder for Finance, Estates and Property Services
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Russell Tanner, Asset and Property Programme Manager, russell.tanner@north-norfolk.gov.uk

<b>Links to key documents:</b>	
Corporate Plan:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing our communities</li> <li>• Investing in our local economy &amp; infrastructure</li> <li>• A strong, responsible &amp; accountable council</li> </ul>
Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	The capital expenditure referenced within this paper is part of the capital programme included within the MTFS.
Council Policies & Strategies	Asset Management Plan 2018 - 2022

<b>Corporate Governance:</b>	
Is this a key decision	<b>Yes</b>

<p>Has the public interest test been applied</p>	<p><b>Yes – Appendix A and Appendix B</b></p> <p>Information relating to Appendix A and Appendix B involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3, Part 1 of schedule 12A (as amended) to the Local Government Act 1972.</p> <p>This paragraph relates to:</p> <p>Para 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)</p> <p>The public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosure for the following reasons:</p> <p>The information is commercially sensitive, relating to itemised pricing and lease negotiations. Releasing this information would be likely to prejudice the Council in obtaining best value, in the interests of Council Tax payers, and would reveal commercially sensitive pricing information of a third party.</p>
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<p>Details of any previous decision(s) on this matter</p>	<p>Cabinet decision dated 8 July 2024</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Delegate authority to the Asset Strategy Manager (ASM) to arrange for an independent rental valuation of the space previously occupied by the RNLI so as to inform future negotiations for the long-term lease of these parts of the Rocket House building.</li> <li>2. Request that the ASM undertakes additional enquiries as to the social, economic or environmental factors, as detailed in the General Disposal Consent Order 2003, prior to agreeing a new long-term lease with the RNLI.</li> <li>3. Delegate authority to the ASM to enter into negotiations for the long-term lease of the premises</li> <li>4. To prepare a further report to Cabinet once negotiations with the RNLI are finalised to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Cabinet are satisfied that one or more of the General Disposals Consent Order 2003 criteria is met</li> <li>• Inform the outcome of negotiations as to rent proposed</li> <li>• Inform of the proposed lease Heads of Terms</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Reason for the recommendations:</p> <p>To provide an opportunity to the RNLI, subject due governance and successful negotiation, to return to the building, under a long-term lease following completion of repairs.</p>
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## 1. Purpose of the report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an update on the current progress of works relating to the Henry Blogg Museum and the wider Rocket House building in Cromer, which is a key community and visitor facility.
- 1.2. To seek delegated authority to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake all works set out in Appendix A - detailed cost plan dated 11 September 2025.
- 1.3. To seek delegated authority to enter into a lease relating to the Rocket House as detailed in Appendix B.

## 2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1. The Rocket House building, located on Cromer promenade, is a multi-let property providing community facilities, a café, and the currently vacant museum space previously occupied by the RNLI Henry Blogg Museum.
- 2.2. The RNLI's previous occupation of the building was on a peppercorn basis due to their initial capital investment into the buildings construction.
- 2.3. The building has faced long-standing issues with water ingress and damp. Following a Cabinet report in September 2023, members undertook a site visit and received a technical briefing. In January 2024, Cabinet approved further intrusive investigations to establish the causes of damp, assess remedial options, and develop budget costings. An additional £1,000,000 was added to the capital programme during 2023/2024 to facilitate improvement works.
- 2.4. The vacation of the RNLI Henry Blogg Museum in August 2024 allowed more extensive investigation of the building fabric. By late 2024, defective sub-floor drainage beneath the public conveniences was identified as a potential primary cause of damp, which would have avoid the need for a previously anticipated large-scale tanking operation.
- 2.5. Refurbishment works to the Rocket House Café and public conveniences were completed between February and March 2025, including drainage sleeving and limited tanking. Ongoing monitoring by consultants and NNDC Property Services has since confirmed improvements in some areas, but persistent damp remains where the rear wall of the building meets the cliff.
- 2.6. The project is being delivered within an approved capital budget of £1,077,085. To date, £779,272 remains unspent. A cost plan for further works has been prepared by Daniel Connal Partnership, with additional allowances required for reinstatement, external repairs, mechanical and electrical upgrades. It is anticipated that these further works will be within the approved capital budget. However, should further capital be required a paper will be brought before Members for their consideration.

### **3. Proposals and Options**

- 3.1. Restore museum to lettable standard and agree heads of terms on a commercial basis with the RNLI. This will require extensive damp proofing works and repairs to the internal fabric of the building allowing reinstatement of the museum.
- 3.2. Seek new tenant willing to take on the building in the current condition.

### **4. Corporate Priorities**

- 4.1. The works outlined in this report align to the following corporate priorities:
  - Developing our communities
  - Investing in our local economy & infrastructure

- A strong, responsible & accountable council

## **5. Financial and Resource Implications**

- 5.1. There is currently £779,272 remaining from the original capital sum of £1,077,085.
- 5.2. The cost plan requested is £367,484 and is for the tanking works and repairs and reinstatement of the internal fabric of the building.
- 5.3. The estimated costs for the remaining works — including reinstatement of office and partitioned areas, external repairs and redecorations, and a full overhaul of mechanical and electrical systems including sub-metering are expected to be contained within the remaining capital budget. However, should further capital be required a paper will be brought before Members for their consideration.
- 5.4. Under the proposed lease terms, the RNLI would pay a commercial rent (independently valued), replacing the previous peppercorn arrangement. The lease also requires the RNLI to cover a proportionate share of the property's running costs through a service charge.

### **Comments from the S151 Officer:**

*Budgeted capital works will support the long-term leasing of the vacant parts of this Council building. Not proceeding as recommended may impact letting the building, lead to more Revenue costs for the Council and deny the re-opening of a tourist attraction.*

## **6. Legal Implications**

- 6.1. Eastlaw will represent the Council in finalising the lease agreement.

### **Comments from the Monitoring Officer**

*A budget was previously put in place for works to address the damp issues at this premises. To the extent that these specific works do not strictly fall within the previous approval, it would appear that these works are needed to provide satisfactory accommodation to tenants and falls within the original budget provision. Eastlaw should be consulted with regard to finalising the lease.*

## **7. Risks**

- 7.1. There are no significant risks arising from the update provided within this report.

## **8. Net Zero Target**

- 8.1. Works to support the Council's Net Zero priorities form part of the specification of planned works to the building.

## **9. Equality, Diversity & Inclusion**

9.1. There are no Equality, Diversity & Inclusion issues arising from the recommendations within this report.

## **10. Community Safety issues**

10.1. There are no Community Safety issues arising from the contents of this report.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Significant progress has been made in investigating and addressing the causes of damp within the Rocket House, with refurbishment works completed to the café and public conveniences and monitoring showing partial improvements. However, damp persists where the rear wall meets the cliff, and further remedial works remain necessary.

The following recommendations are sought:

- Delegate to the Asset & Property Programme Manager in consultation with the s151 Officer to utilise any remaining capital budget to undertake all works set out in the cost plan dated 11 September 2025 in Appendix A.
- Delegate to the Estates and Asset Strategy Manager in consultation with the s151 Officer to enter into a lease based on terms listed in Appendix B.