

# **E-Factor business hub proposal for prominent Grimsby town centre building backed by local authority**

Plans for business support organisation E-Factor to take over a prominent Grimsby town centre building have been backed by the local authority.

North East Lincolnshire Council has approved the business case to renovate St James House into a business hub.

It opens the door to £1.5 million of Towns Fund money, allocated by central government for urban renewal and regeneration.

The funding will be supplemented by further investment from E-Factor, as it looks to add the 10,000 sq ft Bull Ring development to a property portfolio that funds the work it does with entrepreneurs.

Brought to market in June with a guide price of £400,000 – having previously been considered for demolition – the purchase from the Parochial Church Council is progressing, with a deal agreed.

Mark Webb, managing director of E-Factor, said: “We’re absolutely delighted that our investment proposals have been received so well. We recognise that this building has been empty and deteriorating for over a decade and with our investment, supported by the Towns Fund, we are confident we can bring it back to life.

“We’re planning to purchase and redevelop the building to provide quality business accommodation for a variety of local

businesses and entrepreneurs, there will also be space for small business events/exhibitions as well as workshops to support local business people.

“As an independent ‘not for profit’ limited company, dedicated to supporting the huge contribution local business owners make to this town, E-Factor will once again be providing wrap-around business support, easy in easy out terms and all the guidance we can give to help create and grow successful local businesses. The more people who do business in the town centre, the better it will be for shops and restaurants also located there.”





Mark Webb, managing director of E-Factor.

(Image: Grimsby Telegraph)

It is seen as a vital further step in the transformation of St James Square, following major renovation of the area. Just last week the Murmurations art installation by local creative Annabel McCourt was unveiled. New lighting to enhance Grimsby Minster has also been installed, complementing the new paving, landscaping and planting.

North East Lincolnshire Council leader, Cllr Philip Jackson, said: "St James House has been run down for many years, and with the success of the Wilkin Chapman building on Cartergate and the redevelopment of St James Square, a key heritage asset in the town, the next step was to deal with the redundant building in a way that can increase footfall in the town centre and provide benefit to other local businesses.

"I'm delighted E-Factor has put forward these proposals, which bring a new dimension to St James Square, a fantastic heritage asset in our town centre. We are extremely pleased to support this scheme."

E-Factor has been both developing and managing a portfolio of commercial properties around North East Lincolnshire for more than 12 years, having received a huge grant to kickstart entrepreneurial support in the borough.

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It recently added a third phase expansion to its Prince Albert Gardens Enterprise Village and overhauled the original Business Hive on Dudley Street to meet changing needs post-lockdown.

Lawrence Brown, managing partner at commercial property agency Scotts, is acting for the PCC.

He said: "A deal has been agreed with E-Factor and it fits with the wider aspirations held as to what they wanted to see happen with it, in terms of regeneration, growth and opportunities."

Built more than 50 years ago, it currently features a small ground floor office suite, a first floor of suites and an open plan second floor. The third floor features a caretaker's flat.

The E-Factor proposal would see the undercroft car parking spaces – with access sealed since the major office build on Cartergate – transformed into business units.

It is understood the sign-off by the new Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities should now follow.

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