

REPORT FROM: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

TO: COLNE AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

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FORMER PUBLIC CONVENIENCES – COLNE BUS STATION

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide further details relating to alternative options available in relation to the future use and retention of the former public conveniences at Colne Bus Station.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That this Committee re-considers which of the following three options is preferable to determine the future of the above Council owned building; namely that the Borough Council may;

Demolish the toilet block and create a new retaining wall and create a landscaped area

Repair/shore the retaining wall and retain the building shell

Offer the building for sale by way of building licence for refurbishment or redevelopment

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

To determine the future of an asset that has previously been declared surplus but is in poor condition and may deteriorate further without attention.

BACKGROUND

1. In July 2019 a report was submitted to this Committee asking Members to consider a design scheme proposed by the Council's Special Engineering Projects team, which would effectively retain the former toilet block structure, which is in poor condition but provide screening with soft and hard landscaping. The proposal also included monitoring of the defective internal retaining wall.
2. Approval to proceed with the scheme was refused and Liberata Property Services were asked to submit a report to the next meeting of this Committee to include details of the options presented to this Committee in March 2019.

3. Previously considered options included:

- i) the demolition of the toilet block and creation of a new retaining wall to shore the land upon which a taxi booking office has been built and create a cleared landscaped space.
- ii) the retention of the building with internal shoring to prevent structural movement or collapse.
- iii) the marketing and potential disposal of the building by way of Building Licence, where the purchaser would be required to either shore the building or rebuild it as part of a refurbishment scheme or new development. A transfer of the Council's interest would only take place once it was satisfied with the quality of any work carried out to the retaining wall, refurbishment or redevelopment.
- iv) a transfer to the Town Council for its own use or to provide it with an opportunity to repair and refurbish the building or demolish and redevelop the site. Colne Town Council subsequently resolved not to take control of the building.

4. At this Committee on the 23rd September, 2018 a similar report identified four options, one of which was to ask Colne Town Council if it wished to take a transfer of the building from the Borough Council, for existing use or redevelopment. The Town Council have discussed the proposal and resolved not to take a transfer of the building from the Borough Council.

5. Members are reminded that at this Committee on the 6th February, 2014, it resolved to transfer the structure to PEARL 2, who at the time were happy to acquire the building at a peppercorn and carry out the demolition works, required to clear the site and rebuild the retaining walls to stabilise the ground at its cost and avoid any ongoing risk of collapse. PEARL 2 would then have the option to construct a new taxi office or other retail unit on the land to recover the costs incurred in the demolition and remedial works. The transfer to PEARL 2 did not proceed and a replacement taxi office has recently been constructed above, which we are advised does not rest upon the Council's structure.

ISSUE

6. The cost to deal with the demolition of the existing toilet block to allow for the rebuilding of the rear retaining walls, to prevent any ongoing movement or damage to the shopping precinct above, was estimated in 2014 at £37,500 (this cost also included for the construction of a new external facade to the rebuilt retaining wall in stone, to match the new stone stairway walls). If Members wished to see the site cleared and used as a green space or hard surfaced/paved area following demolition an additional cost between £1,000 and £5,000 would be incurred (dependent upon the quality and design) to complete these works.

7. Should the Council wish to build a new similar sized retail unit on the cleared site, for investment purposes, an estimated additional £60,000 would be required to fund the construction.

8. The above costs are still considered to be current and valid but exclude all fees and project management costs (these are estimates and not tendered at this stage. Tendered figures may come in at higher levels.

9. In 2014 the Council was unable to identify a budget to complete the aforementioned works and a claim for subsidence could not be made on its buildings insurance policy. A budget would also have to be identified to carry out any of the aforementioned works to the building at the current time.

10. In the previous report Members were advised of the following:

- there would be little real demand for a refurbished or new retail unit in this location as a standalone retail unit, due to its location, plot size, limited passing footfall, restrictions in servicing a retail use, owner and customer vehicular access and restrictions on passing

over and parking over the working bus station site apron. If the site was offered to the open market and a buyer was found then in its current condition it is also unlikely to result in a capital receipt due to the estimated demolition and rebuilding costs.

- Although the load upon the current toilet building and retaining walls has been reduced, if no work is carried out there is still a potential for further deterioration and or collapse, with a risk of injury or loss to members of the public and businesses located above and adjacent to the site.
- If the building is retained and not demolished or repaired then the Council may at least consider shoring the internal retaining wall with steelwork and pinning to prevent any ongoing movement with an estimated cost between £5,000 and £10,000. This option may require further works in the future at cost to the Council if the building is retained.

Members may also consider the retention and landscape option put to it previously to retain and screen the building.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: The Council identifies surplus land and property for inclusion in its Disposal Programme to support its Capital Programme.

Financial: The disposal or transfer of the building may transfer any liability to carry out and fund any works but this may require the gifting of the land and building to a purchaser/developer. Costs will be incurred in relation to any option to shore, demolish, carry out any remedial works or redevelop the site.

Legal: No legal implications are considered to arise other than as stated in the report except where the building collapses and causes injury or loss of life or where loss or damage occurs to adjacent land, structures or buildings.

Risk Management: The Council is liable for any loss or damage arising out of any collapse or ongoing structural movement causing loss or injury to members of the public or adjacent land owners. Following demolition of the building and rebuilding of the retaining walls, or following a disposal of the land, the risks and liabilities for the Council will be reduced if the land is retained or cease if the building is transferred or sold.

Health and Safety: There are concerns over the structural safety and of the building if no remedial work or demolition is carried out.

Sustainability: No implications are considered to arise directly from this report.

Community Safety: See risk management

Equality and Diversity: No implications are considered to arise directly from this report.

APPENDIX

None

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None