

Notice of Decisions Made

Decision Maker: Councillor Dale Heenan, Cabinet Member for the Town Centre

Subject: Property in Old Town – Termination of Development Agreement

Decision(s): (1) That the Head of Property Assets, in consultation with Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) be authorised to issue a termination notice to parties named in the main body of the report.

(2) That the Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer), in consultation with the Head of Property Assets, be authorised to complete all necessary legal documentation considered necessary to protect the Council's interests.

Consultation: Councillor Nick Burns-Howell – Comment: Good to see the Council taking proactive action to protect one of our most important heritage assets. Deadline after deadline has been missed so we must now find a positive way forward. I hope that the current owner comes forward with sensible plans for the local community to help shape, but if they are unable to do this I feel the Borough should be prepared to take further direct action to ensure the Corn Exchange is protected for generations to come.

Councillor Jane Milner-Barry – Comment: I note and request that the proposed action be reconsidered. I request that a further extension of time should be given to the developer as the plans both architectural and financial have reached such an advanced stage, the dangers to the building of another indeterminate period of neglect are so great and the cost of renovating the shell of the building must at some point become insupportable under any proposed scheme. I am also very concerned about the application for permitted development of the HSBC building adjoining the Corn Exchange, as if the HSBC building were not available to be included in the plan for the development of the Corn Exchange I cannot see how any plan for the Corn Exchange on its own could be financially viable. The applicant also has no plans to alter the facade of the building which is both dominant and ugly. I hope SBC will reconsider the proposed termination.

Councillor Nadine Watts – Comment: I am really disappointed with this outcome. I know that the Corn Exchange redevelopment was not progressing as quickly as we would have liked, but I was impressed with the designs that were being worked on and revised with feedback from the design review panel. I think this is the closest we have ever been to proceeding with this scheme and getting an acceptable planning application submitted. With all the work that has been done to date, I can't see that giving this developer a further time extension to submit a planning application, when we have waited years, would make much difference. We wouldn't get anyone else to proceed any quicker. In the meantime the site would only fall further into disrepair. I think it is important with a site with so much heritage attached to it, it should be dealt with as a whole. I am concerned that the permission for the Forum building granted on 15 January to be converted from offices to flats without any changes to the external façade will have a detrimental effect for future plans of this important site in Old Town. I don't think all possibilities have yet been exhausted with the current developer and that the plans

discussed at the design review panel meetings does show progress. I would like to see one final time extension granted for a planning application to be submitted. I do not support the proposal to serve notice to terminate the development agreement for this scheme.

Councillor Stan Pajak –Comment: Happy to support the recommendation albeit it brings to an end the perhaps forlorn hope of bringing back to life this historic building and the boost it would have given to both Old Town and Swindon.

Date of Publication: Thursday 30th January 2020

Date for receipt of requests for call-in: 17:00, Thursday 6th February 2020

For more details on the subject of the Decision or for a copy of the Decision Note please contact: Emma Gee 07970 205707, egee@swindon.gov.uk.or Douglas Campbell, Committee Services, Mobile: 07779 413886 or Email committeeservices@swindon.gov.uk.

The Decision Note (report) sets out the background to, and reasons for, the decisions referred to in the Notice above. Details of the alternative options put forward for consideration (if any) are also recorded in the Decision Note (report). Any alternative options considered that did not appear in the initial report will be recorded as part of the above Notice of Decisions. The Decision Note is available via the following link on the Council's website =

<http://ww5.swindon.gov.uk/moderngov/mgListPlanItems.aspx?PlanId=652&RP=285>