

**Report to:** Council

**Report Ref:** C1908  
**Meeting Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2019  
**Agenda Item:** 14  
**Prepared By:** Town Clerk



**Subject:** Reconsideration of Resolution 18/121

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Six members (Cllrs Coan, Dalzell, Hamilton Coan, Fletcher, McCulloch and Nicholson) have requested reconsideration of the resolution made in January 2019 and recorded under minute 18/121:

It was RESOLVED to postpone all non-essential works to the Council's portfolio of built assets until at least the 2020/21 civic year excepting the approved works to the front of 60 King Street and the works to the Cemetery Chapel but including the funding of any professional services associated with any future works that are at the planning stage.

It is understood that the intention of the resolution was to postpone the following:

- a) Redevelopment of the Market Hall
- b) Works to the Council Offices following transfer
- c) Works to create commercial spaces within the public toilet blocks

For the benefit of the new members, a brief overview of these three projects is contained in Annex A.

In discussion with Cllrs Hamilton Coan and Nicholson, the decoration to the ladies toilets at the Council Offices was noted as being something a number of visitors and members of staff had commented on and it was noted that the room has no heating which staff have noted leaves it particularly uncomfortable in winter.

In interpreting the wording of the resolution, the Town Clerk considers that essential works are those which are necessary on health and safety grounds or those which are required so as not to prevent the operation of an asset. It is considered that redecoration is prohibited by the above resolution.

Similarly, the Market Hall traders have been requesting redecoration to the front of the Market Hall the replacement of water-stained ceiling tiles which has been refused under this resolution.

## 2.0 DECISION REQUIRED



Council should reconsider the resolution outlined above.

## **ANNEX A: PROJECT OVERVIEW**

### **A.1 COUNCIL OFFICES**

The council has resolved to take freehold ownership of the council offices and library gardens. The transfer is expected to take place in 2019. The approved business case for transfer involves undertaking a programme of improvements to tackle Cheshire East Council's poor maintenance and create commercially rentable offices.

Council had resolved to work with architects to plan these improvements, exploring a greater range of improvements than originally planned – including the demolition of the single storey outbuildings and reconfiguration of the internal spaces. The Council Offices sub-committee was tasked with currently progressing this and reporting to Council with an updated business case.

To date the council has a proposed set of plans for the extension and reconfiguration of the council offices. The costs of preparing plans has been covered by the council's capital receipts reserve. The next stages were to finalise a set of proposals to enable a more detailed costed business case for the proposals to be prepared for council consideration.

### **A.2 MARKET HALL**

The Council took ownership of the Market Hall in 2014, and part of the business case for the transfer was exploring the full refurbishment or redevelopment of the building. The existing building is dated and beginning to show its age. The Assets and Operations Committee worked with architects to develop plans for the demolition of the market hall and reconstruction of a ground floor market with four apartments above. The Council is currently awaiting a response from Cheshire East Council in relation to the overage agreement, but in a position to be able to submit a planning application.

The professional fees incurred have been drawn from the Market Hall reserve which is the trading surplus from the market. Should the project progress, it would be funded by this reserve and a public works loan, which would be repaid from market hall and apartment rents.

### **A.3 PUBLIC TOILETS**

The Council took ownership of two public toilet buildings in 2013 and appointed Danfo to manage the facilities on a 25-year lease. This included works to create three smaller toilets within each building, leaving the majority of each building redundant.

The Assets and Operations Committee developed plans to convert these redundant spaces into commercially lettable units, one at Bexton Road and two at Malt Street. The council has received planning consent for the changes and had expressions of interest from 32 potential tenants and work was needed to amend its lease with Danfo. The cost of the works was £78k and approval to borrow this sum had been obtained. The business case was that the loan would be paid off from the £21k annual rental income.

