

REPORT TO ASSETS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

MARKET HALL REDEVELOPMENT



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| Report Reference | A-21-19 |
| Meeting Date | 22 nd November 2021 |
| Agenda Item | 10 |
| Prepared by | Town Clerk |

1.0 BACKGROUND

At the September committee meeting the committee considered a costed business case for the redevelopment of the Market Hall. It was noted that the cost of the proposed redevelopment to create a new ground floor market hall with upper storey apartments was significantly higher than had been anticipated. The committee resolved to defer consideration of the business case to allow investigations to take place with social landlords to explore if a partnership could be established to deliver the apartments and that the committee reconsider the matter within the next six months.

The Town Clerk has spoken with the two primary social housing operators in Knutsford (Peaks and Plains and Great Places). Great Places has advised the scheme is too small for their involvement. Peaks and Plains has advised that the scheme does not work for them on a social rent basis but the Town Clerk is meeting with the Director of Operations to review their appraisal and discuss how the scheme could work as a different tenure; a briefing note will be sent to the committee following this meeting and it will be verbally reported on to the committee meeting.

2.0 OPTIONS

The business case (previously circulated) outlined four options. A further suggestion was raised at the meeting.

2.1 PROGRESSION OF CURRENT PROPOSALS

To progress the current proposals, a new architect would need to be appointed. The architect would be commissioned to develop the scheme in greater detail and work with a quantity surveyor to provide a more accurately costed scheme for consideration. The council could set a value at which it considers the scheme is approvable.

Alongside this, discussions would need to take place with Cheshire East Council on the use of Silk Mill Street car park for both a temporary market and building compound.

2.2 ALTERNATIVE A: REFURBISHMENT

The council would decide not to progress the demolition and reconstruction of the market hall but instead undertake a thorough programme of refurbishment. This would likely include stripping the existing building to a shell and undertaking a complete new fit out of stall structures, flooring, ceiling and facilities. The roof would be renewed and the frontage of the building could be reconfigured to create a strong street presence. A temporary trading area would need to be provided.

Pros:

- Significantly lower upfront cost
- Simpler project with a less complicated construction phase and reduced need for Party Wall Act agreements.

Cons:

- Fails to utilise space on a first and second floor
- Does not provide increased income through apartments
- Depending on the structure of the building there is more limited scope for reconfiguration

2.3 ALTERNATIVE B: INCREMENTAL REFURBISHMENT (NOT RECOMMENDED)

The council would develop a programme of refurbishment over a several year period undertaking improvements in phases. This would spread the costs over several years but the final market would largely be of the same configuration as the existing. The work would predominantly be undertaken whilst the market is open or through temporary (low season) closures.

Pros:

- Significantly lower upfront cost
- Simplest project

Cons:

- Fails to utilise space on first and second floor
- Does not provide increased income through apartments
- Limited scope for improvement
- Results in several years of disturbance to traders, likely to be several periods where traders cannot trade
- Will take several years to deliver a significant benefit
- May prove challenging to retain and recruit traders during the period
- More challenging to finance – requiring either multiple loans or delays until sufficient reserves built up to fund larger works

2.4 ALTERNATIVE C: NEW SCHEME

The council would decide not to progress the existing plans but commission a new architect to develop a scheme for redevelopment. The brief could be the same (first and second floor apartments) or different (e.g. second storey only, alternative uses for upper floors etc).

Pros:

- May be a more desirable commission for a new architect
- Enables a change of direction
- May be simpler from a cost engineering perspective

Cons:

- Accepts the previous work was largely abortive
- Repeats early design stage resulting in higher cost

2.5 ALTERNATIVE D: REFURBISH WITH UPPER CAFE

The council would decide not to progress the demolition and reconstruction of the market hall but instead undertake a thorough programme of refurbishment alongside the creation of an upper floor café with outdoor terrace.

This would likely include stripping the existing building to a shell and undertaking a complete new fit out of stall structures, flooring, ceiling and facilities. A lift and staircase would be installed at the rear of the building to provide access to the upper floor. The roof would be renewed and the frontage of the building could be reconfigured to create a strong street presence. A temporary trading area would need to be provided.

Pros:

- Lower upfront cost
- Simpler project with a less complicated construction phase and reduced need for Party Wall Act agreements
- Creates additional interest and increased capacity café

Cons:

- Does not provide increased income through apartments
- Depending on the structure of the building there is more limited scope for reconfiguration

3.0 DECISIONS REQUIRED

The committee should consider its options and agree the preferred option(s) for delivering an improved market hall.

Under all options a new architect would be sought. Subject to the option(s) selected the Town Clerk will seek proposals from a number of local architects for consideration at the January meeting. Under alternative options A-D the initial commission would be to develop an initial outline proposal to enable a quantity surveyor to prepare a cost plan for an alternative business case to be considered.