

DELEGATED DECISIONS OF THE BOARD MEMBER, FINANCE AND EFFICIENCY

Friday 25 January 2013

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillors Turner.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Mathew Metcalfe (Democratic and Electoral Services) and Jane Winfield (Corporate Assets)

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made at this meeting.

11. PUBLIC ADDRESSES

The Chair received two public addresses/questions. Mark Pitt submitted questions regarding agenda item 4 (Freehold disposal of Bury Knowle Stables and Barn). Clinton Pugh addressed the Committee on agenda item 5 (Disposal of St. Clements Car Park – Variation of Terms).

Questions from Mark Pitt – Concerning agenda item 4 – Freehold Disposal of Bury Knowle Stables and Barn

Thank you for your kind reply to my efforts to save Bury Knowle Barn and Stables, I will not repeat already voiced concerns, but only address the grounds you gave me for the decision.

To your first point, that this is a conversion and not demolition, which you quite rightly recognised as fundamental – you must be very clear that in this case, conversion is tantamount to demolition, entailing irreversible change to its open internal space that defines its heritage and community value and very character – therefore the first argument falls away?

Moving on the second argument that the receipts are required – the barn can be sold for a reasonable consideration for any purpose that does not destroy its internal space and give a community space, so surely this weakens the strength of argument to the small differential between residential and commercial purpose receipts?

The Asset Management Plan gives you unambiguous policy backing for its retention on heritage and community grounds, so why are you proceeding with this sale?

Officer Response: The Asset Management does not provide such an obligation. Instead the policy on “Heritage and Environment” (page 17 – 3.2(d)) provides an obligation on the Council to retain ownership of an asset where the historic or environmental fabric of the city may be prejudiced otherwise. This property is surplus to operational requirements of the Council and has deteriorated into a semi-derelict state. The Council believes that a sympathetic restoration of the buildings will ensure their continued existence for future generations. This is

most likely to occur if the Council disposes of its interest and, through the planning process, the buildings are developed into an appropriate economic use. The Council therefore believes that the test outlined in the Asset Management Plan has been satisfied.

Address from Clinton Pugh on behalf of himself and Sietske Boeles – Concerning agenda item 5 – Disposal of St. Clements Car Park – Variation of Terms

We understand that the terms and conditions for sale of St. Clements Car Park are being reviewed today. We regret that Members of the public and traders were excluded from these discussions as the new arrangements are confidential.

This is an opportunity to walk away from this sale. The development of St. Clements car park for student housing is hugely unpopular which will have a devastating impact on the local economy and the amenity of local residents. We believe that there is a surplus of student accommodation due to falling student numbers at Brookes University whilst Oxford University has stabilised its intake. We understand that over 500 student units (including postgraduate accommodation) stand empty at the Headington Hill Campus of Oxford Brookes University. Furthermore two hundred units are being constructed at the Travis Perkins site and another 100 or so, on the Cowley Road near the former bus depot.

The car park with its current capacity is essential for the viability of the local businesses. Last Monday at a meeting at the East Area Forum traders expressed their deep concern about the current economic climate and its impact in businesses at St. Clements and the lower end of the Cowley Road and the High Street. The development with its consequent loss of parking will be a further blow for the viability of local businesses. We urge you to use this opportunity to terminate the contract with the developers and save St. Clements car park.

12. COUNCILLOR ADDRESSES

Councillor Dick Wolff submitted a number of questions relating to agenda item 5 – Disposal of St. Clements Car Park – Variation of Terms.

As the questions contained confidential information, the Chair agreed to take them in closed session and agreed to exclude the press and public from the meeting during consideration of these questions in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 21(1)(b) of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2000 on the grounds that their presence could involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as described in specific paragraphs of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

13. FREEHOLD DISPOSAL OF BURY KNOWLE STABLES AND BARN

The Head of Corporate Property submitted a report along with a confidential appendix (previously circulated, now appended).

The Board Member resolved:

- (a) To approve the sale of Bury Knowle Stables and Barn, Headington, Oxford, on the terms as detailed in the "Not for Publication" confidential Appendix 4 to this report and otherwise on terms and conditions to be approved by the Head of Corporate Property;
- (b) To give authority to the Head of Corporate Property to vary the proposed sale or purchasing party as detailed within the report provided the transaction continues to represent best consideration.

14. DISPOSAL OF ST CLEMENT'S CAR PARK - VARIATION OF TERMS

The Head of Corporate Property submitted a report along with a confidential appendix (previously circulated, now appended).

The Board Member resolved:

- (a) To approve the variation of terms of the disposal of St. Clements Car Park, on the terms as detailed in the "Not for Publication" Confidential Appendix 3 of the report;
- (b) To give authority to the Head of Corporate Property to make nay further variations to the disposal provided the transaction continues to represent best consideration.

15. MATTERS EXEMPT FROM PUBLICATION

The Board Member noted the confidential appendices to agenda items 4 and 5 and heard the questions from Councillor Wolff concerning agenda item 5.

The meeting started at 5.00 pm and ended at 5.30 pm