

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 5th September, 2019

## MINUTES

### Present:

Councillor Joe Baker (Chair), Councillor Debbie Chance (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Joanne Beecham, Michael Chalk, Peter Fleming, Andrew Fry, Mark Shurmer and Jennifer Wheeler

### Officers:

Matthew Bough, Sue Hanley and Guy Revans

### Democratic Services Officers:

Jess Bayley

### 33. PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY - DISPOSAL OF HRA ASSET AT GREEN LANE, STUDLEY - TO FOLLOW

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Team Leader presented a report in respect of the disposal of a Council asset in the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) located at Green Lane, Studley and the removal of a railway bridge from an adjacent site.

Number 65 Green Lane was an asset owned by Redditch Borough Council but situated within Stratford-On-Avon District Council's boundaries. The property was void and was not considered to be in a habitable condition. A significant amount of expenditure would be required from Redditch Borough Council to make the property fit for purpose. The railway bridge was also considered to be in a poor condition and this required a lot of financial investment in structural works to rectify. Should the bridge remain in situ it would be subject to annual inspections, which could result in additional financial costs to the Council. In this context Officers were proposing that the bridge structure should be completely removed and the site realigned to allow for two new four-bedroom properties to be built at the site. This would be subject to planning permission that would need to be granted by Stratford-on-Avon District Council.

Members discussed the site highlighted in the report and questions were raised about the potential historic value of the bridge. Officers

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# Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday, 5th September, 2019

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advised that it was an original brick built bridge. There was the possibility that railway enthusiasts would have a view on the historic value of the bridge and these points could be raised through the planning process.

Concerns were raised by Members about the condition of the railway bridge and the potential safety risks in terms of the bridge continuing to remain on site in its current condition. Furthermore, it was noted that it was unlikely that the bridge would be in the correct condition to bear the weight of modern trains, should a railway route be reintroduced on that track.

During consideration of this item reference was made to the Sustrans Route that incorporated the bridge and concerns were raised about the potential impact that the removal of the bridge could have on this route. The Committee was informed that following the removal of the bridge the site would be graded and a crossing point would be provided as part of the realignment works. Therefore the Sustrans route would remain in place.

The reasons why the Council owned the bridge were also debated. Members were advised that officers believed that the bridge had been transferred to Redditch Borough Council ownership as part of the transfers from the Commission for New Towns.

Members also discussed the planning process that would need to be followed in order to make the proposed changes at the site. The Committee was advised that public consultation had not yet taken place but would occur as part of the planning process. Members were assured that as the planning application would be considered by Planning Officers and potentially the Planning Committee at Stratford-on-Avon District Council, proposals by Redditch Members at the Overview and Scrutiny and Executive Committees would not compromise any Redditch members of the Council's Planning Committee.

At the end of the debate on this item the Committee

## **RECOMMENDED that**

- i) No. 65 Green Lane, Studley be declared surplus to requirements and officers to dispose of the site;**
- ii) any HRA capital receipt achieved based on the current market value of No. 65 Green Lane, be used to increase the HRA stock;**

# **Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Thursday, 5th September, 2019

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- iii) **Option C - The Capital Engineering Scheme be approved, with Authority be delegated to the Head of Environmental Services to submit a detailed planning application to Stratford-on-Avon District Council, for the complete scheme. If successful, the Planning consent will include an outline approval for the erection of 2 No. 4 bed houses;**
- iv) **the sites for the 2 No. 4 bed houses be marketed and the received monies, after deduction of the amount as described in ii) above, shall be used as Capital funds towards the cost of the Engineering Works;**
- v) **the additional funds required to complete the Engineering Works be taken from the Capital Locality Scheme Budget, as the proposed works are of the nature that the budget was set up for in the first instance; and**
- vi) **the estimated cost of the Engineering Works cannot be finalised at this time, as Officers are currently endeavouring to determine the most cost effective method of disposing of the extensive surplus material from the excavated embankments. However, subject to the satisfactory outcome of this analysis the total Engineering Works should not exceed £200k.**

(During consideration of this item Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed relating to the financial affairs of any particular body (including the authority holding that information.) However, there is nothing exempt in this record of the proceedings)

The Meeting commenced at 6.30 pm  
and closed at 7.01 pm