

Summary Sheet

Council Report

Cabinet and Commissioners' Decision Making Meeting – 11 September 2017

Title

Greasbrough Public Hall Future Options

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No, but it is included on the Forward Plan

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

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Ward(s) Affected

Wingfield

Summary

Greasbrough Public Hall was declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Council following the "Review of Directly Managed Community Centres" undertaken in 2014. The hall was formally closed as a Community Centre following the review and the building has remained vacant ever since.

A number of options were initially considered for the hall following a marketing period inviting "expressions of interest". However, the Council's Transportation and Highways Team have now identified a requirement for the site of the building for the delivery of a Highway Improvement Scheme at the junction of Main Street/Coach Road in Greasbrough.

The proposed highway improvements at the junction of Main Street/Coach Road will also support the proposals for the Bassingthorpe redevelopment in the area.

Recommendations

1. That the proposed demolition of Greasbrough Public Hall be approved and the cleared site be then retained in Council ownership for the delivery of the highway improvement scheme.
2. That the façade and stone from the Greasbrough Public Hall be salvaged and retained for potential future use and the detail of what is to be retained be agreed in partnership with the Greasbrough Public Hall Community Trust.
3. That the required funding for the project be taken from unallocated operational building maintenance capital funding.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 – Site Plan

Appendix 2 – Location Plan

Background Papers

Nil

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

No

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No.

Title:**Greasbrough Public Hall Future Options****1. Recommendations:-**

- 1.1 That the proposed demolition of Greasbrough Public Hall be approved and the cleared site be then retained in Council ownership for the delivery of the highway improvement scheme.
- 1.2 That the façade and stone from the Greasbrough Public Hall be salvaged and retained for potential future use and the detail of what is to be retained be agreed in partnership with the Greasbrough Public Hall Community Trust.
- 1.3 That the required funding for the project be taken from unallocated operational building maintenance capital funding.

2. Background

- 2.1 Greasbrough Public Hall was declared surplus to the operational requirements of the Council following the “Review of Directly Managed Community Centres” undertaken in 2014. The hall was formally closed as a Community Centre following the review and the building has remained vacant ever since. A copy of the site location plan for the building can be seen in Appendix (A) of this report.
- 2.2 Following closure as a Community Centre, and in order to assist the Council in its decision making process moving forward, the Council did embark on an “Expression of Interest” exercise (EoI) for the hall in October 2016. The exercise was undertaken to gauge what level of interest there would be from both the private and third sector markets in taking over the responsibility for the hall. Interest was invited from all parties for either a freehold purchase, taking a commercial lease or any group wishing to take a Community Asset Transfer Lease under the Council’s adopted policy.
- 2.3 One of the parties who registered an interest in taking out a Community Asset Transfer lease on the building is the Greasbrough Public Hall Community Trust (GPHCT). A local community group formed for the purpose of trying to save the hall and bring it back into meaningful community use.
- 2.4 Following the “expressions of interest” exercise the Council’s Transportation and Highways Team requested if the building could be retained in Council ownership as it was identified from their traffic modelling work that the site was required to facilitate a highway improvement scheme at the junction of Main Street and Coach Road that fronts the hall. The junction at present is a mini-roundabout and it is a severe congestion hot spot at peak traffic flow times. This junction was also recommended for improvement as part of the Bassingthorpe Farm Masterplan and development.
- 2.5 The traffic modelling work in the area had been ongoing for some time due to the proposals for the Bassingthorpe Farm Development. However, it was unknown during the initial marketing of the hall of the scale of the intervention that was required from the Council to fully alleviate the existing congestion at the junction, taking into account the additional traffic flow that would come from the new residential development at Bassingthorpe Farm.

- 2.6 A number of proposals for the highway scheme are currently under consideration and presently two options have been developed, with both options requiring the physical site of the hall and as such the demolition of the building will be required whichever option is finally chosen. One of the options was shown on the latest plans for Bassingthorpe Farm at the public information event held on the 27th April 2017. The Transportation and Highways team have confirmed that any plans to improve traffic flows and meet both current and future demand will require the additional land for a suitable scheme.
- 2.7 Due to the potential need for the site to be retained in Council ownership a number of discussions and meetings have taken place with the local Ward Members and the GPHCT.
- 2.8 The GPHCT object to the demolition but in the event of this being approved they have requested that the stone façade of the building be salvaged as part of the demolition works and retained for future use. It is recommended that this be agreed and if approved the detail will form part of the procurement for the demolition works.
- 2.9 Following the expression of interest marketing exercise all parties who registered a formal interest have now been informed of the Council's intention to retain the building (for demolition purposes) to facilitate the Highway Improvement Scheme.
- 2.10 The building has attracted anti-social behaviour of late and has recently been the subject of a number of vandalism attacks, including a number of thefts from the building (leadwork flashings and valleys from the roof) and the local members have raised their concerns in this respect.
- 2.11 The hall was already in a poor state of repair prior to closure and needed significant expenditure to bring it back into use.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The property is no longer required by the Council for use as a Public Hall and is not required for use as an operational building by any other Directorate in the Council. However, the Transportation and Highways Team that have identified the need for the cleared site for the delivery of the Highway Improvement Scheme required at this location.
- 3.2 The B6089 in Greasbrough suffers from severe traffic congestion and delay. Queues in the morning peak stretch back from the mini-roundabout fronting the Public Hall backing up Potter Hill and through Upper Haugh. In the evening peak queues stretch back from the mini-roundabout to the end of the dual carriageway on the outskirts of Greasbrough. In addition to the current problems the proposed Bassingthorpe Farm development will lead to a significant amount of traffic from the additional homes and employment planned.

- 3.3 The use of the site to facilitate a Highways Improvement Scheme should significantly reduce traffic congestion in the immediate area and will also support the delivery of the Bassingthorpe Farm development.

4. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 4.1 The following options have been considered in respect of the future of the site aside from operational use by the Council.
- 4.2 The property could be let to a third party organisation, though the significant cost of the works required to bring the property up to a useable/lettable standard could prove to be prohibitive. The building is in need of major roof repairs, new boilers and heating system, repairs to the leaded windows and the total replacement of the timber ground floor. This option would mean the proposed future highway improvements could not proceed.
- 4.3 The freehold disposal of the Public Hall to generate a capital receipt has been explored, although if a sale was achieved then this would adversely affect the proposals to improve the traffic flows within the area. Eols received for the freehold sale of the building ranged from £40,000 to £175,000. However, this was before the recent vandalism/theft attacks, so the figures could now be less than the values offered at that time.
- 4.4 The demolition of the Public Hall will enable the site to be included in the Transportation and Highway proposals to improve the junction in Greasbrough, thereby relieving significant traffic congestion. In addition to current capacity issues, the Greasbrough mini roundabout has been identified as a key infrastructure requirement to mitigate the traffic implications of the Bassingthorpe Farm development. The roundabout is a known localised congestion hotspot, with delays experienced within the peak hours, both inbound and outbound. Subsequently, in order for the Council to plan for Bassingthorpe Farm, there is a strategic need to deliver a highway improvement scheme at this location to alleviate existing congestion whilst also providing additional capacity to account for future traffic growth.
- 4.5 Following a review of options available it is now recommended that the proposed demolition of the Public Hall is approved and that a sum in the region of £75,000 (depending on surveys and tenders) is added to the 2017/18 Capital Programme to facilitate this. The cleared site will then be retained by Transportation and Highways for the delivery of the junction improvement scheme.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 The Ward Members for Wingfield have been consulted on the traffic scheme proposals and the options for the Greasbrough Public Hall.

- 5.2 The GPHCT have been involved in both meetings and correspondence for the Greasbrough Public Hall and the potential demolition. The GPHCT object to the demolition but in the event of this being approved they have requested that the stone façade of the building be salvaged as part of the demolition works and retained for future use. This request forms part of the recommendation within this report.
- 5.3 The Bassingthorpe Farm development has been consulted on as part of the Local Plan consultation process. A public information event was held on the 27th April 2017 to provide an update on the masterplan for the development. Initial plans for a new junction, using the land for the Greasbrough Public Hall, were included within the information for this event. The views from the public were mixed, ranging from objections to the demolition and use of the land through to support for the proposals to demolish and improve the highway network.

6. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

- 6.1 A full intrusive asbestos survey is currently being undertaken following which a firm cost estimate will be prepared to enable the demolition to be tendered in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 6.2 If approval to demolish is granted, it is anticipated that the demolition works could commence within eight weeks of the decision being made.
- 6.3 Completion of the demolition would be anticipated to be achieved within 12 weeks of the start on site.

7. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The demolition works would be tendered in accordance with the Council's Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.
- 7.2 The current estimated demolition costs of Greasbrough Public Hall are £75,000. However, this is subject to the outcome of an asbestos survey and the tendering exercise. It is proposed that the cost of demolition is added to the Council's Capital Programme 2017/18, in order to facilitate the highways works, funded through the use of unallocated capital receipts.
- 7.3 The current holding costs associated with the building are £8,000 per annum and this is presently being funded through the Land & Property Bank revenue budget.
- 7.4 The costs for the salvaging/retention of the Public Hall's stone façade will be included in the tendering process for the demolition works.

8. Legal Implications

- 8.1 There is a high risk of further vandalism to the building and the condition will only deteriorate further. The Council has an ongoing obligation under the "Occupiers Liability Act" to ensure that the building/site is safe. The proposed demolition to facilitate the highways scheme will alleviate this.

9. Human Resources Implications

- 9.1 There are no Human Resources issues relevant to this report.

10. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

- 10.1 There are no implications.

11. Equalities and Human Rights Implications

- 11.1 There are no Equalities and Human Rights implications relevant to this report.

12. Implications for Partners and Other Directorates

- 12.1 The decision to demolish the Public Hall will assist the Transportation and Highways requirement to mitigate the traffic congestion issues in the area and also the future traffic growth coming from the Bassingthorpe Farm development.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Due to the continued anti-social behaviour and vandalism at the building, the site is being regularly inspected and secured as necessary to protect the site and to reduce the ongoing risk of further damage, risk to the public and the reputation of the Council.
- 13.2 The demolition costs have been estimated and are subject to a full asbestos survey and the outcome of the tender exercise in accordance with Contract Standing Orders and Financial Regulations.

14. Accountable Officer(s)

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Paul Woodcock	Assistant Director - Planning, Regeneration & Transport
Paul Smith	Head of Asset Management
Stuart Carr	Facilities Manager, Asset Management Service