

AGENDA ITEM NO 9

TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET AND POLICY COMMITTEE TUESDAY 28th May, 2024

BRIEFING NOTE MARKET ROAD COTTAGES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Committee will be aware of the background to the position in relation to the Market Road Cottages (No's 1-2). Until recently these were variously let for residential purposes and/or occupied by contractors undertaking works to Council buildings.
- 1.2 Their acquisition in the last decade reflected a strategic land purchase by the Council, alongside facilitation of restoration works to the Guildhall.
- 1.3 From a premises perspective historically there have been some issues, in particular associated with water ingress (No.1 in particular refers) and/or poor ventilation and heating practice by tenants leading to condensation and associated issues. That has also meant that the premises have not, in cost terms, operated on a commercially sustainable basis given the combination of relatively modest rent and relatively high maintenance costs.
- 1.4 In the past various uses have been discussed from residential lets to commercial use, holiday accommodation to office accommodation, use by partner public and/or not for profit organisations, to use by the Council and an associated range of potential activities. Members will recall most recently a discussion took place with a local charity.
- 1.5 In the circumstances, and with occupation in both units recently coming to an end, Members requested opportunity for all members of Council to visit the premises, familiarise themselves with the layout and/or issues, as a basis to inform consideration of potential future use. Such a site meeting, to which all members of Council were invited to attend, was held on 7th May 2024.

2. NEXT STEPS

- 2.1 As the properties are now vacant and Councillors have viewed the premises this meeting represents a timely opportunity to review the position and consider next steps.

- 2.2 It is appreciated that it is likely premature to make a final decision in the absence of a business case. However, an indication of the 'direction of travel' for future use would assist in terms of working up a proposal and identifying any applicable (such as repair or renovation) costs base, and potential income streams.
- 2.3 In so doing the Council will no doubt wish to balance both the financial and community costs/benefits associated with differing courses of action, the extent to which the premises are/are not considered to be strategic assets worthy of retention, any long-term plan/proposals which might be impacted by different types of usage/tenure, and the ongoing obligation to secure 'best value' from Council Assets.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 To that end the Committee is invited to provide a preliminary indication of it's preferred way forward in order that more detailed work can be undertaken on a preferred approach for further consideration by the Council.
- 3.2 The instructions of the Committee and Council are sought.

**CARL HEARN
TOWN CLERK
TAVISTOCK TOWN COUNCIL
MAY 2024**