

EXECUTIVE

TUESDAY 29 OCTOBER 2019
GIPPING ROOM, GRAFTON HOUSE
6.00 PM

MINUTE 74

Present: D Ellesmere (Leader), S Barber, M Cook, C Jones, N MacDonald, S Meudec, A Ross, P Smart and I Fisher

74. E/19/37 4 College Street

- 74.1 Councillor Ellesmere introduced the report, explaining that the Council had bought 4 College Street as part of its acquisition of sites for regeneration at the western end of the waterfront. The building was Grade Two listed and had been placed on the Council's 'Buildings at Risk' register owing to its condition. Councillor Ellesmere explained that significant work was required to protect the building and that various options had been considered as to how best to do this. It was considered that doing additional works to bring 4 College Street into a condition whereby it could be let as offices would provide the best value. A budget had been set aside for the development of the waterfront sites and these works would be funded from that budget.
- 74.2 Councillor Fisher noted that a Coastal Revival Fund application had been planned when the site had been bought and asked if this had been successful. The Chief Executive explained that approximately £750,000 had been received for the regeneration of St Peter's Dock with the public realm works having been completed earlier in the year, however, no funding had been allocated for the works to 4 College Street.
- 74.3 Councillor Fisher asked whether a more exciting use could be found for the building, suggesting a visitor centre, as had been mentioned previously in a press report in the Ipswich Star. Councillor Ellesmere explained that a visitor centre would require an ongoing subsidy and so was not a feasible option without additional funding. Councillor Ellesmere explained that the masterplan for the remainder of the site was still being developed and that a permanent use would be determined along with that.

- 74.4 Councillor Fisher noted that there was the potential for additional money to need to be spent on the building when the new masterplan had been developed and suggested that works on the building could be carried out after a permanent use had been determined. Councillor Ellesmere noted that the building was at risk and so works needed doing quickly and commented that it was sensible to do additional works in order that the building could be used as offices rather than allow it to sit vacant.
- 74.5 Councillor Jones commented that it was important that the Council took care of the listed buildings in its ownership, not only because it was the right thing to do, but because the Council needed to set an example to other building owners. Councillor Jones noted the cost of the work was significant but that the building was in poor condition.
- 74.6 Councillor Ross noted that residents valued Ipswich's historic buildings and that the poor state of the former County Hall was often commented upon. Councillor Ross commented that it would be irresponsible of the Council to delay works to 4 College Street which were in his view essential.
- 74.7 Councillor Fisher clarified that in his earlier remarks he had meant that the additional works to make the building useable as an office could be delayed until a permanent use was identified for the site and that he supported the essential works to remove 4 College Street from the buildings at risk register being carried out without delay.
- 74.8 Councillor Ellesmere noted that the additional cost of fitting the building out as an office was £108,000, which was around a quarter of the total cost of the restoration works. Councillor Ellesmere explained that delaying this part of the works would mean that they would cost more than if they were completed alongside the essential works to enable the building to be removed from the buildings at risk register.
- 74.9 Councillor P Smart commented that the additional spending would ensure that the Council derived an income from the building as well as ensuring that it was well looked after.

It was RESOLVED:

- a) that the Head of Development, in consultation with the Head of Governance, be authorised to take all necessary steps to deliver the project as set out in this report.**

Reason: To redevelop the property to a condition which enables a letting to be agreed.

- b) that the estimated cost of £423,000 for this scheme be agreed, and that this be funded via the existing capital programme allocation.**

Reason: To allow the project to be taken forward with appropriate budget provision.