

## CABINET

18 DECEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors Chowney (Chair), Batsford, S Beaney, Evans, Fitzgerald, Rogers, Lee and Patmore.

### **218. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies received from Councillor Forward.

### **219. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 4th November 2019 be approved as a true record.

### **220. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None.

### **221. HAROLD PLACE PROPOSALS**

The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues, presented a report to consider two proposals for the future development of the Harold Place site.

The Assistant Director outlined 2 options, as set out in the report.

The Council can either develop the site directly for the operator, or sell it to a developer and allow them to take on the risk. The issue with the developer controlling the site is that the Council would have no direct control over what is built, other than via the planning process. Because of the importance and prominence of this site it is thought that it would be beneficial for the Council to retain control over what is built.

In response to a question regarding the pedestrian underpass from the seafront to the town centre the Director of Operational Services informed the Committee that the Council couldn't impose costs on this project for improvements to the underpass in order to increase footfall. However, this would be the kind of action that could become part of the Town Deal and is something that the Council should consider at a later date.

Councillor Chowney proposed approval of the recommendation of the Assistant Director's report, seconded by Councillor Rogers.

**RESOLVED** (by 6 for, to 2 against) that:

**Cabinet agree to redevelop the site for a restaurant operation (excluding fit out ) for a cost of up to £1.2m, subject to planning permission and an agreement to take the finished property on a long lease, from the preferred bidder (Option 1 in**

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**the report) on the terms outlined. The £1.2m figure to be included within the Capital programme.**

### Reasons for the decision

The Council has marketed the site, has received acceptable heads of terms for a long lease from a relatively well known and quality restaurant if the Council builds out the site to provide a building with a minimum of 2,200 square feet of accommodation.

The Council has previously looked at options for straight disposal of the site for numerous uses ranging from a restaurant, offices to a small hotel.

The creation of a restaurant type offering would appear to be most financially viable proposal received and one which can provide further employment opportunities within the town as well as regenerating the area concerned.

The retention of the ownership of the site and development by the Council would help ensure that the building would be built to a high quality and design and that there is a greater input on the future use of the site.

### **222. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Councillor Lee proposed a motion for the exclusion of the public from the meeting, seconded by Councillor Rogers.

**RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the meeting during the, consideration of the items of business listed below because it is likely that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of “exempt” information as defined in the paragraphs of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 referred to in the relevant report.**

### **223. POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL PROPERTY PURCHASE**

The Assistant Director, Financial Services and Revenues, presented a report to consider the potential purchase of a commercial property within Hastings.

The Assistant Director informed the Committee that the Council had previously been unsuccessful in acquiring this property. However, the successful bidder has pulled out and it has been offered to the Council again.

Councillor Chowney proposed approval of the recommendation of the Assistant Director’s report, seconded by Councillor Patmore.

**RESOLVED (unanimously) that:**

**Delegated authority is given to the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the leader of the Council, to acquire the property as per report.**

### Reason for the decision

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The industrial unit is within one of the key industrial estates within Hastings and remains a prime location as such within Hastings.

The Council needs to ensure that key areas remains attractive for the future to ensure businesses are attracted to, and remain in, Hastings – particularly so as the Council will need to ensure business rate growth in the future.

The property provides the Council with the opportunity to diversify its property holdings and change the overall risk exposure within the portfolio. The Council would secure an additional income stream, but must be prepared to invest further in this building in the future.

(The Chair declared the meeting closed at 5:45pm)