

## **COUNCIL MEETING – 20 DECEMBER 2016**

### **REPORT OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

5 December 2016

Present: Councillors Carr (Chairman), Skittrall (Vice-Chairman), Anslow, Bailey, Beirne, Bone, Ekins, Emerson, Harrington, V Waters and Watts.

Also present: Miss J Thomas, (Head of Planning and Local Development), Mrs S Bateman, (Senior Planning Officer), Mr J Udall, (Design and Conservation Officer) and Mrs C A Mundy, (Democratic Services Officer).

(Councillor G Lawman attended as an observer).

#### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**RESOLVED** to note that apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Lawman, Partridge-Underwood and Walia.

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations made.

In relation to minute number 6 The Hind Hotel Enforcement Notice, Councillor Ekins informed the meeting that he was an acquaintance of Mr Ian Hamilton. He asked that it be noted that he had no known knowledge of any other directors or shareholders of Hotels By Endeavour Ltd/or Capitaliseinvest or any known knowledge of any other Directors/Shareholder of The Hind Hotel Ltd. As such he had no known declarable interest.

**RESOLVED** to note Councillor Ekins' comment, and that no declarations were made.

#### **3. CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES OF THE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 31 OCTOBER 2016.**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Development Committee of 31 October 2016 be approved.

#### **4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DELEGATION**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to seek approval for a scheme of delegation for the neighbourhood planning process, which had been introduced under the Localism Act 2011.

The report detailed the process of neighbourhood planning and the responsibilities of the borough council with each stage being summarised in the report.

Members sought confirmation that should community groups seek to form a neighbourhood forum that ward members would be notified of this. The Senior Planning Officer confirmed this would be the case.

**R1 RECOMMENDED** that:

- (i) the following matters related to Neighbourhood Planning be delegated to the Head of Planning and Local Development:
  - (a) the determination of neighbourhood area applications, unless there are objections and the neighbourhood area is not the same as the parish boundary in a parished area, when it should be determined at Development Committee;
  - (b) the determination of Neighbourhood Forum applications;
  - (c) the carrying out of the legal check;
  - (d) the decision to proceed to referendum where the decision accords with the examiner's, if the decision differs from that of the examiner it should be made at Development Committee;
  - (e) the setting of the referendum date in consultation with the Head of Resources;
- (ii) the 'scheme of delegation of officers' be amended accordingly.

**5. WELLINGBOROUGH TOWNSCAPE HERITAGE INITIATIVE (THI) UPDATE**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to provide members with an update on the current position of the Wellingborough Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI).

The report detailed the progress made on the following:

- Hind Hotel;
- 7 Broad Green;
- The Angel Hotel;
- The Bakehouse, 2-3 Broad Green and the barn 24 Jackson's Lane;
- The Church Hall, Priory Cottage and 27 Church Street;
- Queens Hall, High Street;
- Shop front grant;
- Public realm projects.

Members made particular reference to the former Angel Hotel and the proposal that this be removed from the Wellingborough Townscape Heritage Initiative. There was considerable concern that this former hotel was a particular eyesore and had fallen into disrepair. Other properties in the vicinity were well looked after and this part of the area looked particularly neglected.

The THI Project Manager explained that former hotel was targeted as a 'critical building' for the Heritage Lottery Fund. Numerous correspondence has been sent to the owners to encourage them to apply for the grant funding but there has been no response. The HLF funding was only available for projects that had started during the next year and it was considered extremely unlikely that

this would happen. Officers were therefore recommending that this be removed from the THI, so that monies could be reallocated, rather than it be returned to the HLF.

Members asked how long the funding would remain available and were informed that the deadline date was October 2017. Work on projects had to be commenced by this date. Members concluded that it was imperative that the funding was spent and not returned to the HLF. Members also praised the work of officers for the completion of the work on the Church Hall and Priory Cottage and 27 Church Street.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) Officers asking the Heritage Lottery Fund to give approval to the removal of the Angel Hotel from the Wellingborough Townscape Heritage Initiative;
- (ii) the Wellingborough Townscape Heritage Initiative public realm proposals being submitted to the Heritage Lottery fund for approval.

(Councillor Emerson abstained from voting and Councillor Maguire voted against resolution (i) above).

## **6. HIND HOTEL ENFORCEMENT NOTICE**

The annexed circulated report of the Head of Planning and Local Development was received to seek approval to commission an open market valuation of the Hind Hotel, along with a quantity surveyor's cost estimate of necessary repairs to enable an appropriate notice to be served on the property owners to undertake the necessary repairs.

The Hind Hotel is a grade II\* listed building, which had been deteriorating over the last 15 years.

A condition report was appended to the report which highlighted the extent and severity of the defects. Urgent repairs were required to the roof, carpentry to windows and porch, masonry repairs/re-pointing and rainwater goods overhaul. Internally there were issues with the plasterwork and wall panelling as well as partial floor subsidence in the basement.

If a listed building was not being adequately maintained the council was obliged to intervene to ensure that the owners carried out the repairs.

The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) scheme had identified the Hind Hotel as a critical building for grant funding. Approximately 70% of the costs of approved works, which were the majority of items listed on the schedule, would be met from the scheme. New owners had taken over The Hind in 2015 and started the THI application process. This had subsequently stalled and only minor repairs have been undertaken since.

The current owner is a director of Hotels by Endeavour Ltd who purchased the Hind Hotel, financed by Capitaliseinvest in 2015. In August 2016 Hotels by Endeavour was put into administration.

The Head of Planning and Local Development informed the committee that she was meeting with the administrators shortly and would provide a briefing note to members following the meeting.

The report detailed the four notices that could be served to include Urgent Works notice, Repairs notice, a Building Act Dangerous Structure notice and a Section 215 notice.

Members queried the cost of the Condition Survey carried out by GSS Architects in October 2015 and the previous survey carried out in 2013.

Officers clarified that the survey had been purchased at a reduced price of £750 from GSS Architects when the original party commissioning the work, who is believed to be The Hind Hotel, failed to pay for it. Officers were unable to confirm the cost of the previous survey but would find out this information and let members know.

Members all agreed that The Hind Hotel was an iconic building in the centre of town which needed to be repaired and maintained as a matter of extreme urgency. They asked if the Administrators would be in a position to carry out the work required or whether their intention would be to sell-on the business. The Head of Planning responded to this and said she did not know of their intentions at the present time but that this would form part of the discussions at the meeting. Members were aware that the HLF funding would not be able to go to a company in administration so this presented additional concerns. Members also asked if the council could ensure that owners were more accountable for the maintenance of listed buildings. Concern was expressed in regard to the timescale of commencing the work and whether the HLF deadline date could be met.

Members also asked if consideration could be given to a compulsory purchase order of the building. The Head of Planning and Local Development confirmed that a CPO could be an option. She clarified that only the owner of a property could apply for an HLF grant. If the council carried out and paid for the repairs then a charge would be placed on the property as had happened with the former Indian restaurant on Church Street.

Once an open market valuation of the Hind Hotel had been received along with a surveyor's estimate of the cost of the necessary repairs a further report would be brought back to committee for agreement before a capital bid was made to Resources Committee.

**RESOLVED** that approval be given to:

- (i) an open market valuation of the Hind Hotel and a surveyor's estimate of the cost of necessary repairs being commissioned in accordance with Historic England procedural guidance;
- (ii) a listed building repairs notice being served on the property owners and all interested parties once the cost of repairs was received.

Chairman

The meeting concluded at 7.55pm.

