

**WEST OXFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**UPLANDS AREA PLANNING SUB-COMMITTEE**

**MONDAY 1 SEPTEMBER 2014**

**THE UNICORN PUBLIC HOUSE GREAT ROLLRIGHT**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND STRATEGIC HOUSING**

**(Contact: Phil Shaw, Tel: (01993) 861687)**

(The Sub-Committee's decision on this matter will be a resolution).

**1. PURPOSE**

To seek the Sub-Committee's approval for a further survey of this building, to inform the future consideration of the available options for seeking to resolve the continuing serious deterioration of the Unicorn Public House Great Rollright, which is a Grade II Listed Building.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

That, for the reasons set out below, the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing be authorised to commission the further survey referred to in this report, at a maximum cost of £10,000.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. The Sub-Committee will recall the long history in relation to this matter, with the situation most recently being reported to the meeting on 9 June 2014. The report at that time concluded that Officers were "*seeking legal advice with a view to bringing an "options" report to a future meeting to seek to finally bring this matter to a conclusion*".
- 3.2. Since then, a considerable amount of time has been spent looking at and assessing the various options which are available. In doing so, it has become increasingly clear that the options are complex, potentially expensive, may have corporate implications, and do not guarantee a successful outcome/conclusion to the matter. It is also clear that further expenditure is required before a fully informed decision can be taken by the Sub-Committee.
- 3.3. This expenditure would be for commissioning an updated structural survey to determine the extent of physical works necessary to prevent further deterioration of the building and to ensure the safety of the public, and the likely costs of implementing those works. This will require both a specialist surveyor and a Quantity Surveyor, and it is anticipated that costs would be in the region of £5000 to £10,000 and is crucial to trying to ensure that, ultimately, the best option is pursued.
- 3.4. As can be seen from the preceding paragraphs, this report is an interim one, and the detailed options will be presented at the earliest opportunity after the findings of the survey are known.

**4. ALTERNATIVES/OPTIONS**

- 4.1. The Sub-Committee could decide to take no further action and to leave the site/building as it is.
- 4.2. The advantages of this course of action are that there are likely to be no additional financial costs apart from those associated with future monitoring of the building to

assess whether it has become dangerous. However, such inaction could create a considerable degree of ambiguity/uncertainty as to the eventual outcome and would leave a heritage asset in an on-going state of decline. There may also be reputational concerns for the Council as well. Consequently, this is not recommended, in particular in the absence of the further structural report which is being sought.

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1. As stated in paragraph 3.3 above, it is anticipated that the recommended survey will cost between £5,000 and £10,000.
- 5.2. This can be funded from existing budgets.

## **6. RISKS**

None applicable at this stage, given the recommendation and its purpose.

## **7. REASONS**

The report and recommendation arise from the Local Planning Authority's aim and responsibility to seek to preserve and enhance the historic environment of the District, and the approval of the recommendation will facilitate proper and comprehensive future consideration of the options relating to this building and site.

Giles Hughes - Head of Planning and Strategic Housing

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Background Papers:

None