

Report to CABINET

Report on Oldham Magistrates' Court

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Reason for Decision

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval to purchase and demolish the former Oldham Magistrates' Court, in the context of Members' 2035 regeneration vision and the Oldham Town Centre Masterplan.

Recommendation

That Cabinet:

- Approves the purchase of the land and former Oldham Magistrates' Court located at West Street, Oldham, OL1 1QE from the Government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA); and
- Approves the subsequent demolition of the former Oldham Magistrates' Court building.

Cabinet – Part A

26th February 2018

Report on Oldham Magistrates' Court

1 Background

- 1.1 In March 2016, Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (the Council) commissioned Leach Rhodes Walker to prepare a masterplan for the north of Oldham town centre. The Oldham Town Centre Masterplan, which details plans to improve the town centre up until 2035, was launched in June 2017 and approved in principle by Cabinet on 10th July 2017. It centres upon the significant areas of publicly-owned land in the town centre, including the former Oldham Magistrates' Court located on West Street.
- 1.2 Closed permanently by HM Courts & Tribunals Service in summer 2016 and subsequently transferred to the Government's Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) in March 2017, the purpose-built Magistrates' Court is of concrete frame construction with facing brickwork and concrete panel elevations set beneath a flat roof. In addition to eight courtrooms, the four-storey accommodation contains secure cell areas on the lower ground floor and admin areas and a plant room on the ground floor. The internal specification comprises solid floors, suspended tiled ceilings, painted plaster walls, metal-framed, double-glazed windows, and strip fluorescent lighting. Police Headquarters are connected to the building via an underground tunnel. There are two car parking areas at the front of, and adjacent to, the Magistrates' Court.
- 1.3 Approval is sought for the Council to purchase the vacant Magistrates' Court building and associated land from HCA, for subsequent demolition of the building. Acquisition of the building and land will enable the Council to manage the long-term future of the site, in line with the aims of the Oldham Town Centre Masterplan. The Council's property consultant, Cushman and Wakefield, has advised that certainty will be brought to the market if the Council purchases the Court site from HCA.
- 1.4 The site's potential for providing temporary 'pay and display' car parking is currently being explored, the costs of which will be the subject of further approvals.

2 Current Position

- 2.1 Oldham Magistrates' Court is one of several public sector assets in the town centre identified as no longer fit for purpose in the Oldham Town Centre Masterplan. A formal exercise is currently being undertaken on options for the preferred route to market to deliver the redevelopment of Oldham town centre in the context of Members' 2035 regeneration vision.

3 Options/Alternatives

3.1 The Council could choose the following options:

3.1.1 **Option 1:** Do not purchase the Magistrates' Court building.

3.1.2 **Option 2:** Purchase the Magistrates' Court building and land from HCA, for immediate demolition of the building.

3.2 HCA has confirmed the cost to the Council for land and property purchase as discussed in the Part B Report. Likewise, Unity Partnership has estimated the demolition cost to the Council as outlined in the Part B Report.

4 Preferred Option

4.1 Option 2 is the preferred option.

5 Consultation

None undertaken.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 Finance comments are provided in the Part B Report.

7 Legal Services Comments

7.1 By virtue of Section 120 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the necessary statutory powers of acquisition to acquire the land referred to in Recommendation 1. Stamp Duty and Land Registry fees will apply.

7.2 With regard to such a transaction for the acquisition of property that has not been exposed to the open market, the Land and Property Protocols state that an independent valuation shall be obtained, where it is considered prudent to do so.

7.3 The Report author has confirmed that the Council's Land and Property Protocols have been observed.

7.4 The exemption from publication is justified on the category stated in the report.

(Rebecca Boyle)

8 Co-operative Agenda

8.1 The acquisition of the property supports the Co-operative Agenda by achieving outcomes that contribute to making Oldham a place to invest and do business, and a regenerated town which grows the business base.

- 8.2 This report is intended to build upon Oldham Council's Corporate Plan, "Delivering a Cooperative Oldham" (updated 2013), and in particular one of its key objectives ('A productive place to invest where business and enterprise thrive').
- 8.3 There are 4 key work programmes within the Corporate Plan that will help achieve this objective:
- Invest in Oldham
 - Get Oldham working
 - Destination Oldham
 - Campaigning Oldham
- 8.4 The recommendations contained within this report are intended to make a significant contribution to the Corporate Plan and the key work programmes listed above.

9 Human Resources Comments

Not applicable.

10 Risk Assessments

- 10.1 These comments are provided in the Part B Report.

11 IT Implications

None envisaged.

12 Property implications

- 12.1 These comments are provided in the Part B Report.

13 Procurement implications

- 13.1 Commercial Services will manage any associated tendering activity for this project to identify the most commercially viable solution and will ensure all contracts are secured in accordance with EU Regulations and Oldham Contract Procedure Rules.
- 13.2 Commercial Services supports the preferred option outlined in this report.

(Darren Judge)

14 Environmental and Health and Safety Implications

None

15 Equality, Community Cohesion and Crime Implications

None

16 Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

No

17 Key Decision

Yes

18 Key Decision Reference

ECEN-24-17

19 Background Papers

Oldham Town Centre Masterplan Cabinet Report - 10th July 2017