

Whitchurch Civic Centre and Library – RAAC

Shropshire Council Cabinet meeting – Wednesday 17 January 2024

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet noted the key surveys, investigations and report relating to the condition of the Civic Centre and the presence of RAAC, confirming that the building is beyond economic repair and delegated authority to the Assistant Director Commercial Services to

- i) Arrange for the building to be decommissioned and to remain permanently closed due to its critical condition.
- ii) Set up a working group to include Shropshire Council officers, local Shropshire Councillors and Whitchurch Town Council to finalise the options appraisal for the future of the site and bring forward business cases for the options 1 to 6 listed in paragraph 7.12 to include appropriate surveys, appraisals, assessments and designs, subject to further approval by Cabinet/Council.
- iii) Provide and deliver an interim solution to library and community service provision. Continue to develop the options appraisal and business cases to progress next steps library and customer transformation in Whitchurch.
- iv) Work with Whitchurch Town Council in their identification of new civic accommodation.
- v) Consult with Whitchurch Town Council and the local community ahead of any final decisions on the future of the site.

Minutes:

It was agreed to bring forward item 12 to this point in the meeting.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets introduced the report which provided an update on the actions taken to deal with the identified Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) at Whitchurch Civic Centre and Library, and cease the use of the building on the grounds of safety and recommended further work on the potential redevelopment of the site. It also recommended interim measures for the library service and community use provision.

With permission of the Leader, local members were invited to speak. They expressed the importance of the facility in the town, which was run for the benefit of the community.

Members were reassured that no further action would be taken without public consultation, however the priority was to minimise the risk to users of the building.

It was suggested that the Council worked with the local MP on submitting a bid for Levelling Up 3; however Members were advised that Levelling Up 3 was for existing applications only. The Portfolio Holder welcomed the role that the MP was playing in

meeting the Permanent Secretary of State, supported this action and advised the outcome of that would inform their next steps in lobbying government.

Members were informed that without securing external funding, the building was beyond economic repair.

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