

# SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

## Strategy and Resources Policy Committee

### Meeting held 24 August 2022

**PRESENT:** Councillors Terry Fox (Chair), Julie Grocutt (Deputy Chair), Angela Argenzio, Douglas Johnson (Group Spokesperson), Bryan Lodge, Shaffaq Mohammed (Group Spokesperson), Joe Otten, Martin Smith and Richard Williams

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

1.1 Apologies for absence was received from Councillors Mick Rooney and Paul Wood.

#### **2. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

2.1 **RESOLVED:** That the public and press be excluded from the meeting before discussion takes place on the appendix to item 5 on the agenda on the grounds that, if the public and press were present during the transaction of such business, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.

#### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

3.1 There were no declarations of interest made.

#### **4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS RELATING TO THE ISSUE TO BE DISCUSSED**

4.1 Robin Hughes attended the meeting and asked the following question: I hope that this committee agrees that Sheffield's best chance of winning the confidence of investors and funders is to show a united front in pursuit of achievable goals. Some recent statements to the media have unfortunately appeared to be based on partial information or misunderstandings and have risked showing disunity.

Hasty attempts to reverse new protections can only delay and deter. Raising the listing in Parliament is unlikely to have a happy outcome. The Council's own application has resulted in the listing, and the Secretary of State's response may well refer to this fact. The statement to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport recently made public seems likely to antagonise them when we need them the most. There is no such thing as a "pause". The building is listed now and will remain so unless delisted. This would be unwise to attempt: for Castle House the review took 15 months, and failed.

Instead, will this committee:

- Confirm that Historic England have been consulted to understand the nature and extent of acceptable change;

- Convene a group of elected members and other knowledgeable stakeholders, such as Historic England, Sheffield Property Association and Sheffield Society of Architects, to find a positive way forward on the opportunity provided by this national asset and how to make it deliver for Sheffield;
- Seek a meeting with the DDCMS, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Arts Council England, and others to explore potential support for a cultural use such as the Library-based Sheffield Story House, complementing the National Gallery of the North proposed for the Graves building;
- Prioritise adopting a strategic approach to culture and heritage in order to maximise the potential for central funding in these areas.

The Chair thanked Mr Hughes for his question and invited him to observe the debate on the issue at this meeting, which would respond to the issues raised.

## **5. GRADE 2 LISTING OF THE FORMER JOHN LEWIS BUILDING**

- 5.1 The Committee received a report to consider the implications and options following the designation by the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport of the former Cole Brothers store in Barkers Pool as a Grade II listed building.
- 5.2 **RESOLVED:** That the public and press be excluded from the meeting before further discussion takes place on the grounds that, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, if those persons were present, there would be a disclosure to them of exempt information as described in paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.
- 5.3 The Director of Financial and Commercial services presented details of the financial implications and the Committee discussed the exempt information contained in the appendix to the report.
- 5.4 At this stage in the proceedings, the meeting was re-opened to the public and press.
- 5.5 **RESOLVED:-**
1. That based on the contents of this report and most particularly the legal advice contained in the Closed Appendix the Council does not take any formal action in respect of the decision by the Secretary of State for Digital Culture Media and Sport to list the building Grade II;
  2. That the process to secure a developer continues as planned and that a further report is brought back to this Committee in January 2023 for selection of the preferred developer;
  3. That the selection criteria and scoring matrix be prepared by the Chief Property Officer and agreed with the Chair of this Committee before being issued to developers;
  4. Approval is given for officers to produce a detailed planning brief and options for redevelopment, retention, interventions and potential for partial

demolition in consultation with Historic England to inform future redevelopment;

5. Approval is given for officers to approach Historic England, Arts Council of England, Heritage Lottery Fund, Architectural Heritage Fund, other Government Agencies and SYMCA to explore the potential for funding support in the event that there is a viability gap as a result of the listing of the building; and
6. Approval is given for officers to approach Historic England to query elements of the listing description and the weight that they have given to their significance.

## 5.6 **Reasons for Decision**

5.6.1 Whilst the decision by the Secretary of State to list the building is not what was anticipated, does not accord with the public consultation undertaken by SCC on the future of the site which supported demolition and replacement and has caused some controversy and anger locally, it has provided the certainty required to take forward redevelopment of the building.

5.6.2 Requesting a review of the decision will, while either process is running, reintroduce uncertainty and could be costly. There is also a risk that developers currently interested in the scheme, despite its listed status, could withdraw.

5.6.3 It is therefore recommended that in order to secure a future for the building as soon as possible that the proposed recommendations are approved.

## 5.7 **Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

5.7.1 The alternative options are set out in the body of the report. The legal remedies available to the Council are dealt with in the Closed Appendix to this report.

(NOTE: The result of the vote on the resolution was FOR - 5 Members; AGAINST - 0 Members; ABSTENTIONS – 4 Members.)