

# Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Call-in Panel

**Monday, 17 December 2012**

**Present:** Councillor Steve Holgate (Chair), Councillors Julia Berry, Graham Dunn and Hasina Khan

## **Also in attendance**

**Councillors:** Councillors Peter Wilson (Executive Member (Resources, Policy and Performance)

**Officers:** Chris Moister (Head of Governance) and Carol Russell (Democratic Services Manager)

### **12.OS.1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

### **12.OS.2 DECLARATIONS OF ANY INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **12.OS.3 CONSIDERATION OF CALL-IN REQUEST: 98/102 MARKET ST, CHORLEY, FORMER MCDONALDS SITE, PROPOSED REFURBISHMENT WORKS**

Members were advised of the request submitted by Councillor Peter Goldsworthy for the call in of an Executive Cabinet decision of 22 November 2012 on 98/102 Market Street, former McDonalds Site: Proposed Refurbishment Works. The call in request was on the grounds that "the Cabinet had failed to consider sufficient alternative options".

The call in procedure allows for consideration of the request by a panel of three members plus the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, where the scheduled committee meeting is some time away. If the panel chose to call in the decision of the Cabinet then it would be reconsidered at the next Executive Cabinet meeting in January. If the panel did not accept the call in, then there would be no further action taken.

The Chair advised that the panel should consider the report in light of the objection submitted by Councillor Goldsworthy and consider his alternative proposal "that the site be considered for housing or a combination of housing and retail/commercial use". Councillor Peter Wilson, Executive Member for Resources, Policy and Performance was also present to answer Member questions about the proposal.

Chris Moister, Head of Governance presented the report considered by the Executive Cabinet on 22 November and outlined the process which had taken place in recommending that in principle, 100/102 Market St be refurbished and that 98 Market St be demolished with the creation of a car park in the area between Fleet St car park and Gillibrand St.

The recommendation was seen as a medium term solution prior to the master planning process which would shortly be undertaken. A more detailed scheme would be coming to Executive Cabinet in February or March 2013. The conversion to retail units was to meet a need identified by economic development officers for starter businesses and met one of the Council's strategic objectives of investing in the town centre. Other options, including the provision of housing, had been considered but the view had been taken that the cost of conversion to housing or of demolition and redevelopment was prohibitive at the current time. In addition, the zoning of this area of the town centre under the Local Plan was currently for retail use and whilst housing use could be considered, this would require master planning of the whole of Market Street. Whilst this level of detail had not been included in the report, options had been

thoroughly considered with officers from Liberata, the Council's property management contractor.

Members asked questions of both Councillor Wilson and Chris Moister regarding commercial interest and redevelopment of the site for either retail or housing development. There had been no commercial interest in the site for 15 years which is why the Council had opted to purchase it. If redevelopment of the site has been financially viable when markets were more buoyant, then it would have taken place. The option recommended, was seen as the best option at the current time in order to provide business startup opportunities and to invest and improve Market St. It was important to also bring in some rental income to see some return on the Council's investment. Options for the longer term were still to be considered and would be part of the master planning process for the town centre.

Members concluded that there was still an opportunity to influence future development on the site and that if there had been an economically sustainable housing solution it would have taken place. Whilst the focus was currently on retail use there was an opportunity as part of the master planning process to look at other options.

**RESOLVED - That the request to call in the decision be rejected but Executive Cabinet be asked to ensure that an evaluation of the option for housing on the site be included as part of the master planning process.**

Chair