

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

16 September 2014

Item No. 5 - Public participation and Questions from Councillors

Question from Mr Andrew Hall, Martingate Centre Ltd

Question

On 11 August 2014, the Council made the decision to sell the Corsham Mansion House and Library Martingate Centre Limited.

The sale would both avoid significant actual and contingent liabilities (given that the property is now unoccupied and degrading), and also deliver a major capital receipt to Council Tax Payers.

However the decision maker unilaterally, and without being subject to a call-in, revoked that decision on the 18 August 2014 citing the possibility that, due to information said to have been received subsequent to the 11 August 2014, the Council may now wish to retain the property rather than sell it.

The revocation document confirmed that the matter would be referred to Cabinet for consideration, stating that the property may be needed for future economic development.

I would like to reiterate my Company's willingness and ability to immediately develop the property to meet the needs of such "future economic development". We can carry that cost, freeing up project funding for other purposes.

Given the need to carry out £100,000 of repairs to the property prior to the winter, the decision on whether or not to complete the sale is urgent.

Could Cabinet please confirm whether it wishes to retain or sell the property?

Response from Cllr Toby Sturgis, Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning, Development Management, Strategic Housing, Property, Waste

This matter will be considered by Cabinet in due course. Cabinet will consider whether the council should retain or sell the Mansion House and Library in the light of all the information, including especially the emerging Strategic Economic Plan for Wiltshire and the outcome of future Government bidding rounds. In the meantime the council will take all necessary steps to meet its maintenance responsibilities for the building. Any maintenance costs will be met from within existing resources.