

## Report from the Property Development Committee

Since October 2016, in the light of Council decisions on the possible redevelopment of 5-7 Church Street, the Property Development Committee has been considering options for change. For information, the Committee comprises Councillors Gifford (chair), Allsopp, Brett, Cherrill and Walker, Helen Bowlt (MK Library Service), Phil Sarre (FoSSL), Robert de Grey (local resident and architect) and Lynne Compton in her capacity of building manager. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank all who have taken part in the deliberations both in the committee itself and the Working Party set up to discuss matters in more detail. I would like especially to thank Robert de Grey who has produced a number of different sets of drawings reflecting the Committee's options.

From the outset, the Committee agreed that doing nothing to the building was not a viable option. The building is over 40 years old and in need of improvement and support. The Committee therefore identified a number of potential options which ran from minor amendment to demolition and wholesale redevelopment. The options are set out in more detail in the feasibility study which accompanies this report.

During discussions, it emerged that the Council and its tenant, MKC Library Service, was faced with a clear choice between significant internal redevelopment and demolition and redevelopment. These are outlined in options B1 and D in the feasibility study. Option B1 reflects the wish of MKC Library Service to relocate the current library provision on one floor in order to ensure the provision of an efficient and cost-effective service for the foreseeable future.

This option also creates more appropriate space for both the Town Council staff and the meetings of councillors. It results in the creation of a flexible meeting space with a capacity of around 70 – 75 people which could be hired out both during the day and in the evenings. It also allows for the upper floor to be reconfigured should the Library Service ever decide to vacate the building. The option meets, as far as is feasible, the need to future-proof the building.

At its most recent meeting, the Committee agreed to recommend to the Council that option B1 was the preferred option and that it should be taken to a further stage of community consultation and of more detailed analysis of the financial costs.

The Committee recognises that this commits the Council to a loan from the Public Works Loan Board (or its equivalent) that will result in an increase in the precept. However, the benefit of this approach allows for a substantial investment in the building, in partnership with our tenant, which should enable access to s106 funding currently allocated to the Western Expansion Area and to the Elizabeth House development in Stony Stratford.

The option enables the Council to take further its original ambition that the building should become an educational, cultural and learning centre for the town. An example of such a venture, initiated originally by Goole Town Council and now supported by Arts Council England, can be found at [www.junctiongoole.co.uk](http://www.junctiongoole.co.uk). At the same time, the Council recognises that any development will need further discussion and consultation with the community to put the option into reality.

### The Council is recommended to:

- a) **Consider the feasibility study and accompanying financial information;**
- b) **Endorse the choice of option B1 as the way forward;**
- c) **Establish a series of consultation meetings/workshops with residents, community groups, MK Library Service and other potential users;**
- d) **Further develop the financial and business plan for the new building;**
- e) **Confirm its commitment to the provision of solar photo-voltaic panels through Wolverton Community Energy to make a financial contribution to the costs of the building; and**
- f) **Present a further report to the Council in November 2017 in time for setting the budget for 2018/19.**

Robert Gifford  
Chair, Property Development Committee

29<sup>th</sup> June 2017