

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Octagon Lease Disposal

**Meeting/Date:** Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) - Date 6th January 2015.

**Executive Portfolio:** Resources

**Report by:** Bill Tilah - Estates

**Ward(s) affected:** St Ives

---

### **Executive Summary:**

The Estates Team are inviting applications for long lease arrangements for the historic Octagon building.

The intention behind leasing the premises to a third party has four main goals:

- Preserve the long term future of the building
- Secure a business/services that will benefit St Ives – by increasing footfall / attraction
- Offset District Council costs related to the building
- Secure a long term rental income

There are currently three applicants:

Applicant A – proposal to refurbish and open a café / restaurant – licensed premises

Applicant B – the proposal to retain the character of the premises and replace 'like for like' refurbishment – to open a Farmers Market and other activities

Applicant C – a local Community Group – who would retain the character of the premises and replace 'like for like' refurbishment – opening a community based facility offering a range of activities and business opportunities.

Bids will be reviewed in line with the Council's normal procedures.

### **Recommendation(s):**

Scrutiny note the progress of the case and advise the petitioner that no further action will be taken as a result of the petition.

This page is intentionally left blank

## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 To update Scrutiny following receipt of the petition on behalf of local residents.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Octagon is of considerable historic value and interest to the local community. An initial application to convert to a café/restaurant has sparked concern over the buildings future. The lease process is deemed an effective way to restore and retain the building into the long term future, the current use as a storage shed for street cleaning crew is not viable in terms of the repairs needed to the building to sustain the current use.

## **3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 The Octagon is in the centre of a potential development area; there are no plans to currently develop the area but a freehold sale of the site would not be in the Council's interests. Putting the building to alternative District Council uses would not be viable due to the repairs cost. Leasing the premises is advised as the best way forward.
- 3.2 options for proposed future uses have been limited and will be considered in line with the Council's normal procedures.

## **4. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- 4.1 The lease application process must be carefully considered, to ensure there is no risk in terms of the Council's reputation and that any future use is a viable long term proposal. All applicants will be given the same criteria to apply under and a decision made in terms of which application best satisfies the required criteria.

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 Applications will be considered until the end of January 2015, with a decision made in February 2015. The Council will be looking to progress a lease with the successful bid, subject to successful planning application for change of use and other permissions.

## **6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN**

- 6.1 The lease proposal has a number of benefits to the corporate plan:
- Securing a long term rental income stream from an asset.
  - Reducing service costs by offsetting the R & M liability on the building.
  - Improving local business and economy by establishing a new business in St Ives.
  - Caring for the social and community by preserving a locally important historic building.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**CONTACT OFFICER**

Bill Tilah Estate Management Surveyor  
Tel No. 07881 857224