

COUNCIL – 16 NOVEMBER 2021

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR D BIGBY TO COUNCILLOR K MERRIE

“In a supplementary Portfolio holder question on Ashby’s derelict Royal Hotel on 17th November 2020, I asked, “Given the failure to date of the owners to progress their plans to refurbish the Royal Hotel and their apparent reluctance to even carry out the bare minimum works needed to avoid an Urgent Works Notice, is it not time that this council considers starting the process of moving towards a CPO?”

Cllr Ashman’s reply included the statement, “At the current time and in view of the approach being taken, officers are not of the view that the need for permanent repair has accumulated to the point where there is potential for serious harm. If the situation persists once the planning application has been determined or during regular monitoring of the building’s condition, the Council still have the ability to pursue a repairs notice and potentially a CPO if this was the appropriate route to follow at that time”.

Twelve months later - there has still been no update to the outstanding 2019 planning application, members have not received any of the promised monthly inspection reports since the one dated 28th July, and English Heritage have found it necessary to place the Royal Hotel on its At Risk Register, describing its condition as “poor”, only one category above the worst “very bad”, with the comment “Slow decay; no solution agreed”.

Could the portfolio holder please provide an update on the planning department’s progress on negotiations with the owners of the Royal Hotel, the date and outcome of the latest condition survey (previously promised monthly), and comment on whether he believes that the Compulsory Purchase Order route may now be appropriate?”

REPONSE FROM COUNCILLOR K MERRIE TO COUNCILLOR D BIGBY

“I can confirm that progress is being made on the continuing discussions and negotiations with the owners of the hotel and we are close to receiving a revised package of information relating to the proposed enabling development works connected with the planning application. The package of information will also include amended designs for the proposed buildings either side of the hotel and will be subject to formal re-consultation in the near future.

I’m sure members may appreciate that that the issues around enabling development are both complex and time consuming and officers continue to spend a considerable amount of time in progressing matters.

The last condition report was sent to the Ashby members on 31 August and not 28 July as Cllr Bigby has suggested in his question and I’m aware that officers have now re-sent Cllr Bigby a copy of this report. The hotel was visited again on 4 November and this was delayed slightly as the owner could not attend the originally agreed date in October. An updated condition report following the visit on 4 November will be circulated to members in due course.

Offices have advised that there is currently no need for a further urgent works notice to be served, and while the planning application continues to progress, the Compulsory Purchase Notice route is not appropriate at this stage, but would not be ruled out if necessary as the previous Portfolio Holder advised last year.”