

Item 6 - Archbishops Palace Otford

The attached report was considered by the Finance Advisory Committee on 4 September 2018. The relevant Minute extract is below:

Finance Advisory Committee - 4 September 2018 (Minute 17)

The Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services presented the report which provided the background to the Archbishop's Palace in Otford and recommended the granting of a lease to the Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust to pursue their ambition to convert what remains of the North West corner tower and part of the northern gatehouse, into a self-sustaining centre for the dissemination of knowledge about the heritage of the building and area.

Granting a lease to the Trust would enable them the opportunity to develop and deliver their Business Plan and to secure necessary external funding required to achieve their vision and objectives, to create a self-sustaining Centre for educational, information and tourism use and preserving the valuable heritage asset. It would also remove the Council from future maintenance liability. However if, after a review, sufficient progress could not be made, the lease could be determined and responsibility revert back to the Council. If this was necessary the Council could then pursue the residential options outlined in the options appraisal report.

Members discussed the need for regular reviews not just one at five years, the Chairman advised that it was the intention to review regularly.

The Chairman exercised his discretion and allowed Cllr. Edwards-Winsor to address the Committee, and he explained his role within the Trust and advised that there was much local support for the project.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

The Chairman moved the recommendations contained within the report subject to the amendment to 'five yearly reviews' and it was

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that a 99 year lease, at one peppercorn, per annum, if demanded, be granted to the Archbishop's Palace Conservation Trust to allow the Trust to develop their objectives with five yearly reviews dated and inserted into the lease to allow progress to be considered by both parties and such other terms as agreed.