



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Agenda Item 4 Housing Committee – 26 September 2017

Public Questions

QUESTION FROM	QUESTION TO
M. Sargent	Councillor Mattie Ross
<p>It is now evident that the cost of repairs for the Bradley Street houses as stated by SDC officers at the June meeting said to be in excess of £37,500 is totally unfounded and deceived the members. There is no shred of evidence to prove this sum. The buildings are structurally sound. The stock survey they carried out in January disclosed under the FOI Act shows both properties to be in good order with no extraordinary maintenance liability for the next 20-30 years. Will the members now consider the alternatives to demolition put forward at the June meeting?</p>	<p>I have reviewed the figures with officers in response to the concerns raised and am satisfied that the figures quoted in the June Committee report were appropriate. The suggestion that members were deceived is not justified.</p> <p>The Committee properly considered the alternatives to demolition at its June meeting and voted unanimously to proceed to serve demolition notices as part of the redevelopment proposals.</p> <p>It should be remembered that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Empty properties at Gloucester Street were inspected; it being apparent that their age and condition, including damp would make them inappropriate for repair, improvement and redecoration given relevant housing standards. 2. Although full building surveys are not undertaken on every property given the time and cost of doing so, the Council has since surveyed 8 Gloucester Street. It is considered that the works required to this property would cost an estimated £53,000. Further as the questioner may be aware, the stock condition survey for No. 15 Bradley Street reveals that the property suffers from damp and mould; and at no time has it been contended that there are structural issues with these properties.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Alternatives to demolition as well as the information regarding the condition of 13 Bradley Street were provided to the Committee before the item was debated. 4. The proposal to leave No. 13 standing and redevelop the remainder of site was also put to the Committee during the debate and specifically considered by the Committee. 5. Whilst individual occupiers' views are respected and have been carefully considered, the position remains that retaining the properties is not reasonable particularly when set against the benefits of delivering new affordable housing, built to modern energy efficiency standards.
Mr. R.C. Baker	Councillor Mattie Ross
<p>The council houses in Bradley Street under threat of demolition lie within the Town Conservation area. They were the first council houses to be built in the town, (1921) and have as much historic value as their 16th, 17th and 18th century neighbours.</p> <p>They mark the ensuing period from the Great War and given the reasons for which they were built make them very much part of the towns heritage.</p> <p>Will members consider alternatives to demolition, there are design options in circulation showing development schemes for the land at the rear which will provide the optimum housing density.</p>	<p>As explained, the Council has considered alternatives to demolition.</p> <p>To ensure there is no further misunderstanding, these properties are not Listed; nor are they within the Town Conservation Area.</p> <p>As always, the optimum number of properties on the site will be determined through the planning process and the affordability of any scheme. Excluding two of the properties at Bradley Street would undermine that objective.</p>

Mr. K.J. Wilkes	Councillor Mattie Ross
<p>I was told at the last meeting my proposal to develop the land to the rear of 13/15 Bradley Street was not a viable alternative to demolition, in Stroud District Council's opinion the residual site was too small, there was no rationale to this judgement. We have since instructed architects who have produced conceptual schemes which show the proposal is viable and the members have been sent a typical layout for six 3 bed units. There is an alternative eight two bed units and many other variations of the mix. Will the members now consider this proposal?</p>	<p>Having considered the alternatives to demolition, it is also helpful to remember that in terms of viability:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The physical layout of units but also the number of units are key to ensure it is possible to repay the public costs of building and maintaining the properties over a 30 year period; 2. Rental income is much lower in the public sector than the private sector; 3. Building costs have increased significantly in the last 2 years; 4. Whilst the Council's preference is to build its own much needed modern council homes on the site, Housing Associations similarly need sites which will deliver a minimum of 6 units; 5. The Council's initial scheme provides for 8 units on the site, accessed from Gloucester or Bradley Street; but even then, other variations will be possible, it being usual for schemes to evolve as they progress; 6. Unfortunately, the scheme you have presented is for 3 bed, 3 storey homes which are smaller and taller properties than either the Council or potentially a Housing Association would build to meet demands in social housing as opposed to simply the private sector. <p>Whilst it is appreciated that all three persons who have asked questions have concerns about the committee's decision, considerable support is available from the Council to help tenants who need to move, including for example the home loss payment. I do hope you will let the Council and its officers give the extensive one to one support which other tenants have appreciated.</p>