

Committee: FULL COUNCIL

Date: 17 August 2021

Title: Magistrates Court

Purpose of Report

For members to provide thoughts into how the Magistrates Court can be redeveloped to suit the Town Council's needs.

Recommendation:

Members Resolve to establish a Council Offices Working Group and to email their thoughts on the principle uses of the building to the officers by the end of August.

Report:

1. As a result of the completion of the purchase of the Old Magistrates Court the council now needs to take steps to decide exactly how it wishes to use the building.
2. Attached to this report are details of the current layout of the office (**Appendix 14A**). Various ways in which the building could also be used have included setting up a dedicated meeting room and also providing a limited tourist information point. However currently no firm plans have been resolved by the council.
3. Members have been offered the opportunity to look over the building ahead of the full council meeting on the 17 August 2021 in order that they can view the building in person.
4. In order to progress with developing the building there will need to be plans drawn up that encompass what intentions members have for the building. In order that members can reach some consensus members may wish to set up a working group to establish a way forward. The remit of this group may also include looking at what plans the council may have for its current offices and how the use of the two buildings could be tied together.
5. Members have already indicated that they wish to see the administration of Ilminster Town Council take place within the building and that this should house be the location to which members should be able to go if they wish to make in person enquiries to the office.

6. At present it does not appear that the Magistrates Court is large enough to house both offices for up to 6 staff and also a chamber for meetings. By however having access to the New Street building however this would be one possible way forward.
7. It is suggested that in order to establish all members thoughts, that each member submits to officers their ideas on how they wish to see the building developed by the end of August. These thoughts should contain clear ideas on what they see the principle use of the building to be along with what support functions the building may also provide. A standardised form can be circulated to members to assist with this.
8. If members then choose to establish a working group this will allow the group to provide architects with information that can be incorporated into some proposed designs that can be brought back to members. Three architects will need to be approached in order to satisfy financial regulations.ⁱ Once a design is agreed upon the same regulations will be applied to the awarding of a building contractor.
9. If the working group meets before the next Full Council meeting in September it will be able to bring suggested Terms of Reference to Full Council for agreement. It may well be that members may wish for the working group to fall under the remit of the Resources Committee. All final proposals regarding the selection of an architect and plans for the building should be brought to Full Council for confirmation.
10. Members resolve to establish a Council Offices Working Group and to email their thoughts on the principle uses of the building to the officers by the end of August.
11. Members may wish to propose motions of their own.

Mark Tredwin
Town clerk
August 2021

ⁱ Ilminster Town Council Financial Regulations (21 July 2020) – Section 11