

**Call in Form**

*NB: Please note that urgent decisions are not subject to Call-in. (See paragraph 16 of O&S procedure rule 15)*

<p><b>Decision/Minute Number: 564</b>  <b>MASTER'S HOUSE, SHEERNESS -</b>  <b>LOW CARBON REFURBISHMENT</b></p> <p><b>Cabinet: 17<sup>th</sup> March 2021</b></p>	<p><b>Deadline Date for Call-in: 30/03/21</b></p>
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**Reason for making the Call-in** (\*please continue on a separate sheet as appropriate)

I wish to call in the Masters House decision under the following headings:

- Inadequate consultation relating to the decision
- Viable alternative not considered
- Relevant information not considered
- Outside the policy and budgetary framework

The report submitted to cabinet lacked detail for what I believe was required for an informed decision to be made, nor was the detail made available for all members to scrutinise what was being proposed. I attended the cabinet meeting and note that this was raised at the meeting by a visiting member who questioned what other options had been explored, what work had been done to create the business case if the business case is sound or lacking consideration relating to other areas. A cost to the council of £1.3million pounds should be made available to members to question.

At the meeting the Deputy cabinet member for economy and property indicated that the cabinet member and officers had gone into 'minute detail' to consider the proposal. I do not feel this was evident from the report and supported by the cabinet member herself when stating that 'it appears by the report that there is no thought gone into this'. If the cabinet member holds that view then other members should have the ability to raise questions and be given answers.

If the relevant information in the paper to cabinet in order for them to make an informed decision is lacking then it is difficult to understand how cabinet could have made an informed decision at the meeting, unless there is information that is not contained within the paper and discussed in private session which I am not aware of.

Given the expenditure of public money to be associated to this item it is right and proper that there be a public meeting held for members to scrutinise the proposals.

The report, I do not think provided sufficient information on the wider aspects of this project

and what risks and opportunities could impact on the work and future provision of Masters House. I think there needs further consideration on the viability of the proposals given that we are aware that both St Georges and Conqueror Court have spaces available, this could suggest the need for such office space isn't great locally. The current leaseholder at Masters House has been sub-letting over the years and information should be available as to if the space has been fully occupied. For these reasons I think scrutiny needs to explore if there is a consistent proven case given as to the need for this expenditure.

The council considered in 2012 and 2018 potential redevelopment of this site and opted not to. As a potential viable this should be fully explored, I do not think it is clear in the report if this has been fully explored other than comments by cabinet members in relation to preserving the car park.

Relevant information not considered, we are aware of an alternative proposal going through planning at Queenborough plus the one at the dockyard church, which also would have implications on the viability of this project if they were to be agreed.

I am also minded that it is outside the policy budgetary framework as the ongoing costs relating to leasing a building do not appear to have been fully addressed. Consideration needs to be given to the ongoing costs for Masters house including insurance and maintenance. This particularly applies if the council are planning to offer 'hot desking' to users, it is not clear if there will be additional costs to the council in this case to provide ICT and telephony services.

<b>Please also tick the boxes as appropriate:</b>	
Decision outside Policy and Budgetary Framework	Yes
Inadequate consultation relating to the decision	Yes
Viable alternative not considered	Yes
Relevant information not considered	Yes
Justification for the decision open to challenge on the basis of the evidence considered	

**The Alternative proposal is** (\*please continue on a separate sheet as appropriate).

Consider not implementing the changes.

Could the public funds associated to this project be made better use of if the need to refurbish Masters House was not necessary and the objectives of refurbishing Masters House be achieved via different means. Could alternative means of providing office space be achieved?

<b>Called-in by:</b>		
Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee		yes
Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, in the absence of the Chairman		
Five non-Cabinet Members		
Name	Signature	Date
<b>Checklist</b>		Yes/No
Does the reason and alternative proposal cover any of the types of decisions (1-10) in the Constitution Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules?		No
Is the call-in form completed correctly?		Yes
Has the call in form been received within the specified time?		Yes
The reason for the call in is unclear or does not relate to the decision specified on the call-in form		No
The reason for the call in is a question the answer to which can be found in the report		No
Is the request frivolous or defamatory?		No
<b>Authorisation</b>		
Discussed with Policy and Performance Officer/ Democratic Services		Yes
Monitoring Officer is justification for call-in valid?		Yes
Please return hard copy to:		For office use only

Democratic Services, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT	Form received by: David Clifford Date and time: 29.03.2021 at 10:21
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