

## Record of officer decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	<b>Refurbishment of 4 &amp; 5 Blackfriars Street, Hereford to meet strategic housing priorities, as a consequence of the restrictions caused by Covid-19</b>
<b>Date of decision:</b>	6 August 2021
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Interim Director of Economy & Place
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	<p>Cabinet decision on 3 December 2020 approved refurbishment of 4 &amp; 5 Blackfriars Street to meet strategic housing priorities with a budget of up to £500k</p> <p>Link to decision:  <a href="#">Decision - Purchase of accommodation and refurbishment of 4 &amp; 5 Blackfriars Street to meet strategic housing priorities, as a consequence of the restrictions caused by Covid-19 - Herefordshire Council</a></p> <p>Directorate scheme of delegation Economy and Place, Strategic Housing row 7, Approval for the allocation of grant money to developers/RSL's/applicants. Council function.</p> <p>Cabinet Member housing, regulatory services, and community safety approval of the Empty Property and Development Capital Budget</p> <p><a href="http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=50034941">http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?Id=50034941</a></p>
<b>Ward:</b>	Widemarsh
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>The Cabinet Member Housing, regulatory services and community safety.</p> <p>The Cabinet Member for Commissioning, Procurement and Assets.</p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	To refurbish 4 & 5 Blackfriars Street, Hereford within a budget of £500k, to enable the council to protect and accommodate those currently in Covid-19 emergency accommodation from future homelessness.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No's 4 &amp; 5 Blackfriars Street are a pair of semi detached houses owned by the council, previously used as offices but left unoccupied for a number of years. The properties have not been maintained and need substantial works to stop further deterioration. The conversion will provide 6 x 1 bed apartments</li> <li>• Having empty properties in the City Centre does not comply with the Empty Property Strategy</li> <li>• To remove the homeless from the street, the council has a statutory duty to house those who are homeless</li> <li>• Housing client under Covid 19 in unauthorized accommodation such as Bed &amp; Breakfast has a revenue implication to council as costs are unable to be reclaimed from government. The conversion could make a revenue saving</li> <li>• The properties form part of the homeless pathway, removing street homeless from the streets. Tenants will be accommodated with support available, when they become 'tenancy ready' they will be assisted to bid for permanent Registered Provider accommodation therefore allowing a through flow of tenants.</li> <li>• The properties will add to the councils ambitions in the County Plan of providing 1000 dwellings in 4 years</li> <li>• The properties will be refurbished to a high sustainability criteria</li> </ul>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The available budget has been agreed</li> <li>• The architect has prepared the specification and costed the scheme</li> <li>• A range of other options have been considered and dismissed</li> </ul>

<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do nothing. This is not recommended as the council has a statutory duty to house those who are homeless.</li> <li>• Leave the properties empty. This would be in conflict with the council’s County Plan 2020-2024 and the council’s Delivery Pan 2020-2024 to bring empty properties back into use. In addition to this without investment, these properties could fall into disrepair.</li> <li>• Purchase 6 properties from off the open market. The market is moving at pace and the council cannot compete in timescales.</li> </ul>
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

Signed

Date: 6 August 2021

Neil Taylor  
Interim Director for Economy & Place