

BARNSTAPLE TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of Finance & General Purposes Committee

Monday 8th February 2021 at 7.00pm By Video Conference Call.

Present: Councillors:

Cllr J Phillips (Chair), V Monk, V Elkins, A Windsor, I Roome, J Hunt, J Carter, L York, A Shar, J Coates, V Nel (Vice-Chair) & J Orange.

Also in attendance:

Mr Robert Ward (Town Clerk),

S Petters (Assistant Town Clerk)

Cllr V Monk

Members of the Public:0

41. Apologies for absence

Were received from Councillor J Wilsher (Health), A Rennles (Fremington Parish Council meeting), reasons were considered and approved by councillors. (NC)

42. Dispensations and Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

Cllrs I Roome, J Hunt, J Phillips, L York & J Orange as members of North Devon District Council, have a dispensation under SO66 to discuss and vote on any item on the agenda unless the item refers to a financial or legal agreement or dispute between the two authorities.

43. Minutes of the last meeting

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2021, are approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (NC)

44. Budget Monitoring Report

Councillors asked questions about nominal code 5577 Street Furniture – Benches & Bins to understand better the allocation of these funds.

The Town Clerk explained that the budget has been used to replace bins within the town but in consultation with North Devon Council who are responsible for emptying.

RESOLVED: To note the budget monitoring report (NC)

45. Devon County Council funding

The Assistant Town Clerk explained to the committee that the Town Council is in receipt of £9,000 from Devon County Council.

This is for a partnership project with North Devon Council and One Northern Devon to trial a database system that supports working with and co-ordinating volunteers.

The funding supports a one year trial and the Town Council will be the host organisation for the software.

RESOLVED: To note the trial project and funding (NC).

46. Pannier Market and Guildhall business case feasibility.

The Town Clerk presented the attached report (Appendix One).

The report proposes that in conjunction with North Devon Council a specialist consultant be appointed to undertake a review of the options for the future running of the Pannier Market and Guildhall.

This has come about following the award of £6.5M to North Devon Council through the Future High Streets Fund, this amounts to 69% of the original bid.

Options are being considered for how to manage the shortfall and one possible proposal could be for the Town Council to seek ways of contributing funds, possibly through a Public Works Loan.

Members discussed the potential opportunities for being involved in and possibly having the sole responsibility for running the Pannier Market and Guildhall as a single entity.

RESOLVED: To agree to engage with North Devon Council to appoint a specialist market consultant to carry out a detailed review and provide a report on the operational opportunities available for the Pannier Market and Guildhall with the findings to be reported back to members.

And to approve a revenue budget of up to £5,000 to be funded from the Buildings Review Budget. (7 for: 5 Abstentions)

(Cllrs I Roome, J Hunt, J Phillips, L York & J Orange abstained as members of North Devon District Council)

47. Review of Fees & Charges

RESOLVED: The Committee resolved to adopt the updated Fees & Charges, as presented to the meeting, for 2021-2022 (appendix 2) (NC).

48. Barum House Reception Accessibility

The Town Clerk presented the attached report (Appendix Three).

Cllr York asked that the access surface from the pavement in to reception be considered as well.

RESOLVED: To approve an allocation of up to £22,000 to be funded from the Buildings Review Budget for the remodelling of the reception area including, the rebuilding of the existing reception desk / counter, mechanical door opening equipment for the two entrance doors, replacement of the existing intercom system and the installation of a hearing aid loop (NC).

49. National Lottery Awards for All grant bid on behalf of One Barnstaple

The Assistant Town Clerk explained that the Town Council is submitting a lottery bid to enable the facilitation of work in the coming financial year.

One Barnstaple are unable to submit a bid in their own right because they are not a constituted body.

RESOLVED: To note the submission of the bid to National Lottery, Awards for All (NC).

50. CCTV Rock Park

The Town Clerk presented the attached report (Appendix Four).

The report explains that the new grounds maintenance compound at Rock Park would benefit from having CCTV coverage to support the security of the containers and equipment.

North Devon Council are in the process of upgrading the whole North Devon CCTV system and this new camera will integrate with the system.

RESOLVED: To agree to the installation of a new CCTV camera and column to support the security of the grounds maintenance compound at Rock Park and approve an allocation of £4,500 from the General Properties Reserve (NC).

51. Absence of press and public

RESOLVED: That the following matter shall be taken in the absence of the press and public, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to meetings) Act 1960, as the item contains exempt information as defined by Standing Order 82a. (NC)

52. St John’s Community Centre extension to lease

The Town Clerk provided an update to the committee on the current status of the lease with Tesco, discussion he has been having with their agent and the potential for the extension of the lease to support future.

The Town Council have awarded the contract for the repairs to the roof, this is awaiting a period of warmer and dry weather and we will be installing new signs on the exterior of the building.

RESOLVED: To note the Town Clerk’s verbal report (NC).

Meeting closed at 8.00pm.

Chairman.

Signed:

Dated:

APPENDIX: 1

Report to: FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 8TH February 2021

Subject: THE PANNIER MARKET & GUILDHALL

Report by: Town Clerk

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Following their bid to the Future High Streets Fund North Devon Council have been awarded £6.5M, 69% of the amount originally bid for.
- 1.2. The District Council have to respond to the Government by the end of February to identify how they will either:
 - deliver the project within the available funds,
 - find additional funding to make up the difference
 - or a combination of both delivering the project for less funds but still raise additional monies to meet the shortfall.
- 1.3. Barnstaple Town Council have approached North Devon Council to express that they are interested in helping to meet the shortfall, this could involve the Town Council applying to the Public Works Loan Board for up to £3.0M.
- 1.4. At the North Devon Council Strategy & Resources Committee on 1st February they approved up to £10,000 of funding for the engagement of specialist market consultants to carry out a detailed review and provide a report on the operational opportunities available for the Pannier Market with the findings to be reported back to members.
- 1.5. The Town Council have been invited to join in the review to help with the decision process as to whether it should be:
 - 1.5.1. Considering taking out a loan to support the FHSF project.
 - 1.5.2. Making an application to North Devon Council for the asset transfer of the Pannier Market to the Town Council as a return of the investment, and:
 - 1.5.3. To understand the operational opportunities for the Town Council, if it were to be successful in its application to the District Council.
 - 1.5.4. To understand the opportunities of managing the Guildhall and Pannier as single entity as a single physical building and operationally as a business.

2. Recommendations:

- 2.1. Members to agree to engage with North Devon Council to appoint a specialist market consultant to carry out a detailed review and provide a report on the operational opportunities available for the Pannier Market and Guildhall with the findings to be reported back to members.
- 2.2. Subject to 2.1 being approved, members approve a revenue budget of up to
 - £5,000 to be funded from the Buildings Review Budget.

3. Reason for Recommendation:

3.1. The attached North Devon Council “Strategy & Resources Committee” report gives the context and sets out reasons why it is necessary to take this action currently, in particular:

3.1.1. The Pannier Market has been running at a year on year loss to North Devon Council, in the region of £100,000 PA.

3.1.2. The Future High Street Fund monies provide a ‘once in a lifetime’ opportunity to reflect on the advice contained in the reports the District Council have commissioned, endorsed by consultation, and to transform the Pannier Market (and Guildhall), which in turn will have a transformational impact on our town centre.

3.2. The decision to take a Public Works Loan needs to be informed by the viability of combining the Guildhall and Pannier Market as a single entity.

3.3. To give options for alternative business models for operating the Pannier Market and Guildhall.

3.4. To better understand the potential impact on Town Council finances, staffing structure and governance arrangements.

4. Report:

4.1. Barnstaple Town Council and North Devon Council are separately providing commercial retail units within the Guildhall and Panier Market, these could potentially be more effectively managed as one entity.

4.2. The Guildhall and Pannier Market buildings are physically linked, and both would benefit from being maintained as a one building.

4.3. Town Councils are well placed to manage the running of markets and market buildings, there are many examples locally and nationally where this currently happens.

4.4. The Objectives of the study are proposed to include the following options:

- Business plan options to turn around the financial viability of the market whilst increasing footfall and vibrancy.
- Research and comparisons with similar markets locally and regionally.
- Proposed layout and use changes to the market and Guildhall and input into the current FHSF proposals.
- A detailed analysis and assessment of the alternative operational and management options for the market and Guildhall available to NDC and BTC. These options should include but are not limited to:
 - NDC retaining management and operational responsibilities of the Pannier Market and BTC the Guildhall
 - BTC taking on management and operational responsibilities of both buildings
 - NDC entering into a lease arrangement with a specialist market operator to run the market
 - NDC entering into a management agreement with a specialist market operator

5. Implications

5.1. **Resource:** The report will require up to £5,000 and officer time to support the procurement process and to engage with the consultants during the investigation and production of the report.

5.2. **Legal:** North Devon Council will undertake the procurement on behalf of both councils.

5.3. **Resident / Access / Equalities:** as premises accessible to the public accessibility of both buildings will need to be considered within the report.

6. Appendices:

6.1. North Devon Council (Strategy & Resources Committee Report)

7. Background papers:

7.1. Barnstaple Technical Vision Document

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APPENDIX: 2

Barnstaple Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee
Proposed Fees and Charges February 2021

Room Hire Rates (Hourly)
No changes proposed for existing rates.

	Previous 2020		Proposed 2021	
	Commercial Rate	Community Rate	Commercial Rate	Community Rate
Castle Centre Hall	£15.00	£12.00	£15.00	£12.00
Castle Centre Meeting Rm	£10.00	£8.00	£10.00	£8.00
Guildhall*	£30.00	£24.00	£30.00	£24.00

* Fees for Guildhall include VAT, no VAT chargeable on other hires.

Officer delegation in place to enable negotiation of discount for regular hire, and a delegation to Chairman/Clerk to agree variation in fees where commercially beneficial, or to enable partnership working or extraordinary community benefit.

Copying/Printing

Current	Proposed
10p per sheet	10p per sheet

Setting up for meetings (hourly rate during office hours)

Current	Proposed
£10.00	£10.00

Setting up for meetings (hourly rate outside office hours)

Current	Proposed
£20.00	£20.00

Fee for unlocking/locking outside office hours

Current	Proposed
£20.00	£20.00

Town Clerk
February 2021

Report to: FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 8th February 2021

Subject: BARUM HOUSE RECEPTION ACCESSIBILITY

Report by: Town Clerk

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. The ground floor of Barum House has been subject to an almost complete refit following the flooding in August 2020. Part of this work includes the need for a refit of some of the reception desk that has been damaged by the flood water.
- 1.2. In exploring the options for repairing the reception desk staff have been discussing improving the accessibility of the reception area for people who have impaired mobility.
- 1.3. The contractor who is undertaking the flood repairs has sought costings for rebuilding the reception desk, including the reuse of some of the existing materials.
- 1.4. This has included considering the control of the two public access doors to reception, both of which are very heavy and the need for an improved intercom for the building and a hearing aid loop.
- 1.5. The Covid-19 pandemic has also highlighted that there is limited space within the reception for two staff to be able to work and social distance safely.

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1. Members to agree an allocation of funding for the remodelling of the reception area including:
 - 2.1.1. The rebuilding of the existing reception desk / counter
 - 2.1.2. Mechanical door opening equipment for the two entrance doors.
 - 2.1.3. Replacement of the existing intercom system.
 - 2.1.4. The installation of a hearing aid loop.
- 2.2. Subject to 2.1 being approved, members approve a revenue budget of up to - £22,000 to be funded from the Buildings Review Budget.

3. Reason for Recommendation:

- 3.1. The Town Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that its facilities are accessible as is reasonably possible.
- 3.2. The Covid-19 pandemic and the likely longer term need for social distancing within workspaces means that we can only have one member of staff at a time in the reception area.

4. Report:

- 4.1. The need to undertake the work on the reception area has arisen, due to the flooding in August 2020.

- 4.2. This presents the opportunity to remodel the reception desk and reception area to allow for two members of staff to sit independently and more space for members of the public when they visit.
- 4.3. Adding the intercom enables some visitors to be managed before they need to enter the premises.
- 4.4. Through the insurance claim an allocation for the reinstatement of the reception has been made and this can be used to offset some of the cost of remodelling of reception.

5. Implications

- 5.1. **Financial:** Up to £22,000 to undertake the changes to the reception area, including remodelling the reception desk / counter £15,000, door controls £4,000, intercom £1,800 and hearing aid loop £500 (all costs are estimates).
- 5.2. **Legal:** Equalities Act 2010 and Health & Safety at Work Act 1974

6. **Appendices:** N/A

7. **Background papers:** N/A

APPENDIX: 4

Report to: FINANCE & GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

Date: 8TH February 2021

Subject: CCTV ROCK PARK

Report by: Town Clerk

1. Introduction:

- 1.1. North Devon Council have awarded a contract for the renewal of their CCTV system to upgrade it from analogue to digital.
- 1.2. The capabilities of the new system will allow for the addition of extra cameras.
- 1.3. The new grounds maintenance compound at Rock Park would benefit from having CCTV coverage to support the security of the containers and equipment.
- 1.4. In addition, the Rock Park toilets are being considered for extra security measures including CCTV cameras, this will be discussed at the next Rock Park Trust meeting in April.

2. Recommendation:

- 2.1. Members to agree to the installation of a new CCTV camera and column to support the security of the grounds maintenance compound.
- 2.2. Subject to 2.1 being approved, members approve a revenue budget of up to - £4,000 to be funded from the General Properties Reserve.

3. Reason for Recommendation:

- 3.1. The addition of CCTV cameras at these locations will help to reduce damage due to theft, vandalism and anti-social behaviour.
- 3.2. The compound area lacks "natural surveillance" and although it has been protected with a monitored alarm system, CCTV would add another level of security and deterrent.
- 3.3. The CCTV system will be monitored through the NDC central CCTV monitoring hub that has direct links to the Police.
- 3.4. The Rock Park toilets have been subject to significant recent anti-social behaviour and substance misuse.

4. Report:

4.1. The current CCTV camera in Rock Park will be updated through the contract to renew the existing CCTV system.

5. Implications

5.1. **Financial:** Up to £4,500 from the General Properties Reserve and an equivalent sum from the Rock Park Trust Budget if they decide to proceed.

5.2. **Legal:** CCTV recording is subject to GDPR regulations, this would have to be considered prior to installation.

5.3. **Environmental / Climate:** N/A

5.4. **Resident / Access / Equalities:** Current anti-social behaviours at the Rock Park toilets are impacting on the ability of the Town Council to provide a facility that is safe for the general public to use.

6. Appendices: N/A

7. Background papers: N/A

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