

RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Resources Committee held at 6.30pm on Tuesday, 14 June 2022 in the Town Hall, Banbury.

Present: Councillor Powell (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors: Bunce, Dalton, Garrett, Hussain, Kilsby, Phillips, Richards, Strangwood.

Alternate Members: None.

Officers: Mark Hassall (Town Clerk & RFO)
Paul Almond (Director of Environment)
Martyn Surfleet (Executive Officer)
Simon Lewthwaite (Events & Hospitality Officer)

R.4/22 Apologies for Absence

Councillor Mallon, Councillor Colegrave.

R.5/22 Declarations of Interest

None

R.6/22 Minutes of the last Meeting

IT WAS RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 29 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Vice-Chairman.

R.7/22 Income & Expenditure Report

The Committee considered a report prepared by the Town Clerk & RFO comparing year-to-date income and expenditure with the projected annual budget for the financial year. The report showed all expenditure incurred up to 26 May 2022.

General Services variances were principally

- Staffing vacancies contributing £13k
- Timing of invoicing for grounds maintenance works impacted by seasonality and awaiting May invoicing, across Parks, Football pitches and Horton View £8k.
- Prior year utility charges for MUGA's from OCC £6k
- Timing of cleaning and wax of Fine Lady Statue

Underspends on Resources Committee also principally

- Reduced Central Admin costs including salaries, training and computer software.
- Town Council Events income for Jubilee (Grant) and Food Fair are both ahead of budget, with costs below budget, including Mayoral inauguration.
- Town Hall expenditure continues to remain muted in line with a gradual opening up agenda, and Other services to the Public including timing of small grants (currently being processed in line with budget expectations).
- Other Costs & Income includes increased interest income.

Financial Effects & Risk Assessment

This is a monitoring report so there are no specific financial effects arising from it. Without effective budget monitoring there is a risk that budgets will not be adhered to, thereby weakening the Council's ability to demonstrate an effective use of resources. This risk is being mitigated by closer monitoring of spend using a phased budget.

Members raised a number of questions on the income and expenditure figures which were responded to by the RFO.

IT WAS RESOLVED to receive and note the Income and Expenditure report.

IT WAS ALSO RESOLVED to note the verbal update provided by the Town Clerk on measures taken to reduce vacancies and retain staff, in particular in relation to salary sacrifice schemes to lease electric vehicles.

R.8/22 Town Hall Usage Report

The Committee considered a report of the Events Manager, for an application of a local organisation of Banbury to become a fixed term tenant within empty space at Banbury Town Hall

Proposal

- Banbury BID are seeking a town centre location, following the expiration of their current tenancy.
- Following conversations with Banbury BID, they have expressed a desire to move their office operations to Banbury Town Hall, alongside a willingness to pay the same rental levels as they currently do.
- Banbury Town Hall has an underutilised space, the upstairs committee room, which could be hired out under agreement up until the end of March 2023. This is in line with the end of the existing mandate for Banbury BID.

Financial Effects & Risk Assessment

- The extension of current discount scheme is anticipated to provide additional income to the town council, whilst being limited, in order to retain the capacity for daily hires of the main hall and downstairs function room.
- It is also anticipated that increased footfall to Banbury Town Hall facilities has the capacity to increase the profile and awareness of hiring facilities at the Town Hall.
- Whilst flexibility may be reduced within the hiring of the Town Hall facilities, it is believed this can be mitigated through the use of the main hall as an alternative.

Members raised a number of questions on the usage of the Town Hall facilities which were responded to by the Town Clerk.

It was RESOLVED to approve the terms of long term hire agreed by the Town Clerk in consultation with the chair of the resources committee.

It was AGREED to request officers to bring forward a report outlining future plans for the usage of facilities across the estate including the Town Hall.

R.9/22 Peoples Park Café Update

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Environment to update Members on the progress of the café capital programme construction and to approve the next stages of securing an operator.

Building Works – Update

- The refurbishment works are going well, Officers continue to monitor progress and work with the Architects and contractors on the build out.
- The construction phase of the project is still expected to be complete by the predicted deadline of week commencing 18th July.

Procuring a Letting Agent – Update

- Officers shortlisted two commercial property letting agents to provide proposals on marketing the Café inviting operators to bid for the opportunity to run a catering service for the public in the new facility.
- The Council received two proposals one from White Commercial Chartered Surveyors Ltd and one from Wild Property Consultancy Ltd, following evaluation and consultation with the Leader of the Council the Town Clerk has placed an order with Wild Property Consultancy to market the new café opportunity.

Securing an Operator - Update

- Work has already started on marketing the opportunity for operators to submit proposals for running a catering business in the new café facility.
- The operator will be selected based on an equal weighting of Quality & Community Value as well as Commercial Terms.
- The deadline for submission of the Invitation to Tender will be 11th July 2022.
- Evaluation of submissions, award and lease agreement issued by 11th August 2022.
- Successful Operator will be handed keys by the start of September.

Financial Effects & Risk Assessment

There are no risks arising from these items and all financial effects can be contained within existing budgets.

Members raised a number of questions on the café capital programme construction and the next stages of securing an operator which were responded to by the Director of Environment.

IT WAS RESOLVED to –

- Note the Building Works Update.
- Note the Procurement of a Letting Agent Update.
- Approve the Town Clerk be given delegated powers, following evaluation of received proposals and consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairman of this Committee, to award and issue a licence agreement to the successful operator.

R.10/22 Town Hall Refurbishment Report

The committee considered a report of the Events & Hospitality Officer to propose to Members, the updating of the Town Hall infrastructure to improve Banbury Town Council's environmental footprint, including additional insulation and the conversion of the central heating system to electrified heating systems. Pending consideration by the District Council's Conservation Officer.

Building Works – Proposals

- The process of submitting plans to Cherwell District Council is underway for the installation of insulated plasterboard / Cellatex to the ceiling of the Main Hall. We are obtaining quotes from Garrett Electrical, Dimplex, Eco-Ease and C J Chiles to carry out the works required.
- Banbury Town Council's Planning Officer has identified that we will not need planning consent for the installation of the electric heaters.
- The works can be divided into three phases as follows, with indicative pricing from initial quotes where received;
 - Installation of scaffolding to fit Eco-Ease Insulation to windows and Ceiling Panels (£24k)
 - Installation of Ceramic Electrified Heaters replacing the current gas central heating system. This is of more immediate need on the ground floor which currently has no heating).
 - The removal of 9 cast iron radiators in the Grand Main Hall, plus the fitting of oak / brass grilled heater covers (£9k)
 - Installing 87.5mm of roofing insulation in the panelling of the ceiling in the Main Hall (£40k)
- Officers held a meeting with Dimplex and Garrett electrical to assess viable methods of heating the Town Hall. It was confirmed that Dimplex was unable to provide the Council with adequate heating methods, however CJ Charles and Garrett electrical continue to explore heating solutions. An update will be provided at the next Resources meeting.

Financial Effects & Risk Assessment

As a place of work, Banbury Town Council has an obligation to provide appropriate heating within the building and the costs relating to downstairs can be met from existing earmarked reserves. Provision of alternative heating within the main hall would need to be financed from reserves, as would insulation, however grant funding may be available to offset some of the financial impact.

Members raised a number of questions on the Town Hall Refurbishment report which were responded to by the Events & Hospitality Officer and Town Clerk.

It was RESOLVED to -

- Note the Building Works.
- Authorise officers to receive quotes for remedial works necessary for repair to existing heating within the town hall where existing budget provision is adequate.
- Approve the Town Clerk be given delegated powers, following evaluation of received proposals and consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chairman of this Committee, to award works following listed building planning application and tender process as necessary.
- Invite further funding bids to meet environmental measures to further the aspiration of the Councils Climate Emergency statement.

The meeting ended at
7.20pm