

Minutes of the Extraordinary Meeting of the Facilities Committee, St Ives Town Council, held in the Committee Room, The Guildhall, St Ives on Thursday 12 April 2018 at 7.00pm

PRESENT

Chairman - Councillor T Andrewes

COUNCILLORS

Griffin J

Lait R

Harris A

Symons J

Henry R

Tulley R

OFFICERS

Town Clerk

Facilities Manager

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE – were received from Councillors R Glanville, C Nicholls, J Tanner, S Tanner and T Williams.

F.78 MINUTES

Members considered the Minutes circulated prior to the meeting and agreed two amendments:

Minute F.71 (Library transfer update) – noted that the third element of the resolution should be a recommendation to Council as it referred to the allocation of Reserves

Minute F.75 (Cleaning, Porthminster public conveniences) – add ‘drawn on’ to the end of the sentence for resolution (1)

RESOLVED – that the Chairman signs as true and correct record the amended Minutes of the Facilities Committee meeting held on 15 March 2018.

F.79 CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

None.

F.80 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBER/OFFICER INTERESTS

None.

F.81 OFFICERS’ UPDATE REPORT

No report (extraordinary meeting)

F.82 ST IVES LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE: TRANSFER ISSUES

Following on from the report to this committee on 15 March, the Chairman of the Library Task & Finish Group presented the report which set out the planned next stages, decisions which need to be made at this stage of the process, the evolving plan for delivery of the new, integrated service, and sought endorsement for the proposed way forward for the Task & Finish Group.

Background information included: decisions on funding of refurbishment works; the principle for the proposed staff structure; recent meetings with Cornwall Council and the funding agreed for backlog maintenance work on the building; draft job descriptions had been sent for independent job evaluation; the IT requirements for the new service were being developed; and information had been provided to enable the writing of the Director's Report – the approval of which would be the trigger for Cornwall Council to commence the formal transfer process.

The report set out various updates and matters to be considered, which were addressed in turn.

Community Consultation

It was noted that the Library Group had served as a ready conduit for consultation with a sector of the community which has a clear interest in library matters. The Library Group had started to arrange appointees for the Library Partnership Board and wished to know when it would be operational. The committee noted that the terms of reference for the partnership board had been approved and so it was a matter of deciding a suitable commencement date.

Discussion included:

- a willingness to establish the Library Partnership Board and acknowledged the benefit in formalising the discussions between the town council and the library group.
- noted the efforts of the community group in consulting on the new service and their work in organising adult education classes and other events
- noted the need for support from the Council's administrative team of staff, acknowledging the current staff capacity issues
- taking account of the terms of reference, the remit of the Partnership Board may be limited in the initial stages, until the transfer is complete

Overview of the proposed service

In noting the proposed services to be provided, the committee considered:

- the possible addition of providing a point of contact for town council services, in addition to Cornwall Council services
- a suggestion to more use of window space to publicise the services and events in the building
- enquired whether there was enough provision of toilets in the building for the proposed increase in footfall and usage of the building
- there is already a time capsule in the library and it was suggested that as part of the building work the town council could include a similar idea to mark this milestone in the life of the library.
- Recognised the ever-evolving provision of libraries and the need to be ready to reinvent the service frequently to keep up with technological advances and the changing needs of the user.

Proposed opening days and hours of service

It was reported that the VIC and the library currently open at different times and days and so there was a need to align opening times, while ensuring that the staffing requirement is affordable within the council's approved budget for the combined service.

Considerations raised by the committee:

- Bank holiday opening to be considered, and staff to be consulted

- Evening opening and Sunday openings for Library services had been explored before by Cornwall Council and there had been a greater public need for Sunday opening, with a lesser need for opening in the evenings. It was understood that Truro Library opens on a Sunday, on a year-round basis.
- There was scope to open just the ground floor (eg on Sundays) by locking the door to the stairs, although this would close access to the toilet for use by the public and would need reconsideration of the location of the teen section of the library.
- Noted that the staffing of the new service would be supplemented by volunteers in the new, integrated team.
- The VIC Manager had been happy with the principle of closing at 3pm rather than 4pm on Sundays in the summer.
- Evening openings – noted that there would potentially be evening uses of the first floor and so there could be scope for evening opening, but at this stage the plan would be for either caretaker or volunteer cover.

Alignment of IT systems

The aim is to install an IT system to enable effective integrated service delivery, with members of the public to have their different needs met by a single member of staff at a single workstation. Recent discussions with Cornwall Council had established that there would need to be discreet town council elements which could not be linked to the Cornwall Council IT network and so there were likely additional costs to the town council associated with this.

A meeting with Cornwall Council and with Microtest had been promising and so it was expected to be achievable to find a workable way of installing an IT system to enable integrated service delivery. There will be a need for separate broadband provision for the town council elements and for two card payment machines – one for Cornwall Council bill payments and the other for town council transactions.

Staffing and HR

There would be a need for staff engagement and consultation, and the need to seek additional HR expertise to guide the town council through the transfer process. It was proposed to utilise the HR element of the Devolution Fund grant received from Cornwall Council in the previous financial year, to commission external HR support for the consultation and transfer process. The committee was advised that the transfer schedule was based on the transfer of the building, service and staff on the same date.

Building works related to the transfer

It had previously been agreed that the backlog maintenance work would be carried out after the summer highways embargo. It was suggested that the external works could be externally commissioned, to expedite the work and to ease pressure on staff, noting the current staffing capacity issues due to staff absence, and that a time clause should be built into the contract for the external building works

When arriving at decision, it was noted that the timescales of implementation may be subject to review at the Council meeting on 19 April, where pressures on staff workloads would be considered.

RESOLVED – that

- 1) The Library Partnership Board be established with immediate effect
- 2) Town council appointees to the Library Partnership Board be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Council
- 3) The first meeting of the Library Partnership Board be convened upon confirmation of appointments by Cornwall Council and the Library Group
- 4) External HR expertise be commissioned for the staff consultation and TUPE transfer processes, and for a decision on the company to be awarded to be delegated to the Town Clerk in consultation with the Library Task & Finish Group
- 5) External contractors be commissioned, or a project manager be appointed, to carry out the building work associated with the transfer.
- 6) In noting the proposed opening times set out in the report, these were agreed as the basis on which to plan opening times and staff cover, with the following adjustments: confirmed a preference for 9.30am opening times, agreed to close at 3.00pm on summer Sundays, the intention would be for the whole building to be open on summer Sundays, and it was agreed not to explore potential evening opening.

Meeting closed at 7.58 pm

Chairman