



## **NOTES OF THE TOWN HALL WORKING GROUP MEETING**

**Held remotely via Skype for Business on  
Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021 10.30am**

### **1. Architect Plans and Building Refurbishment Works**

#### **a) To consider and discuss quotes submitted by architects**

- Town Clerk highlighted that three architect companies had provided quotes in response to the original brief issued on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2020:
  - PJ Lee Architects
  - K-Architects
  - RSC Architect
- She explained that no contractors were able to provide quotes by the deadline of 5<sup>th</sup> January 2021, however further to a decision of Council on 25<sup>th</sup> January 2021 she had reissued the brief to contractors with an extended deadline of 19<sup>th</sup> February 2021.
- It was noted that the brief has been sent to the contractors on the original list and also to additional contractors both local and further afield.
- Members discussed the costs submitted by architects and acknowledged that grant funding would need to be sought.
- It was noted that detailed costings are required for grant applications.
- Members discussed whether the project required an architect and a contractor to complete the projects or whether the work could be conducted by a contractor without the expertise of an architect.
- The Project Manager, Mr Bob Burns was invited to provide his view. He explained that although a contractor may quote a lower cost for the project, in his view, the professional expertise of an architect would be required. He added that an architect will have professional indemnity and will ensure that the work is planned thoroughly and high standards are maintained.
- Members discussed increased costs for building works due to 'Covid inflation'.
- Members agreed that the Town Council should appoint an architect for the Town Hall refurbishment project and discussed the responses submitted.
- Town Clerk highlighted that the Working Group does not have decision making authority and therefore the decision to appoint an architect would need to be made at a full Council or Finance Committee meeting.
- Members discussed making a recommendation to Council for a preferred architect.
- Cllr Unwin referred to the costs supplied by the architects and noted that out of the two companies that provided a detailed breakdown of costs there is very little difference in the quotes provided. He proposed that with consideration of the reputation and previous work carried out by local architect PJ Lee, that the Working Group make a recommendation to Council to appoint PJ Lee for this project.
- Project Manager, Bob Burns was invited to give his view. He highlighted that whilst PJ Lee architects predominately serve the private sector, K-Architects have more experience working with the public sector. He added that K-Architects had provided a more detailed response to the brief and provided his recommendation in favour of K-Architects.

- After discussion, Members acknowledged that K-Architects had provided a response with a more comprehensive approach to the project and agreed that the view of the Working Group should be to recommend that K-Architects are appointed to the project.
- A Member highlighted that Chapel Row Architects had responded to the brief to advise that they are not a limited company and asked if they would be able to submit a quote. Members discussed whether a response should be provided to allow Chapel Row Architects to provide a quote. It was agreed that the Town Clerk could respond to allow them to submit a quote by 19<sup>th</sup> February.
- Cllr Burnett highlighted that there was very little information about Chapel Row Architects online and suggested that further investigation is carried out.
- Town Clerk highlighted that some of the contractors that had been told they could submit a quote by 19<sup>th</sup> February have in-house designers and therefore may be able to provide plans similar to those that could be provided by an architect. It was acknowledged that these quotes would not be received before the Town Council meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February.
- Deputy Town Clerk/RFO reminded Councillors that they need to consider all of the information before making a recommendations in order to ensure that their recommendation is not pre-determined.
- Members agreed that based on the facts available at the present time, the Working Group is minded to recommend K-Architects are appointed to design and plan the refurbishment work at the Town Hall, however Members are not pre-determined and will review any further information available at the meeting, take part in the discussion and make a formal decision at the full Council meeting.

**Recommendation:** The Town Hall Working Group are minded to recommend K-Architects be appointed to design and plan the refurbishment works at the Town Hall, however this is subject to any further information available prior to the meeting and is also subject to change if responses from contractors received by 19<sup>th</sup> February, can provide a similar service to those proposed by the architects.

**b) To consider building contractors, tender process and timescales**

- It was noted that the brief had been re-issued with a new deadline for receipt of quotes by 19<sup>th</sup> February. Town Clerk explained that one of the biggest local contractors had already responded to advise that the value of the works is likely to be below their minimum threshold where they would consider themselves to be competitive and therefore they will not be providing a quote.
- It was highlighted that the value of the building works would be likely to be above £25,000 and therefore in accordance with the BTC Financial Regulations, the Council would need to issue a formal tender for this work (Please see Appendix A with details of the relevant Financial Regulations).

**c) To consider the budget allocated for this work**

- Members reviewed the total cost of quotes from contractors and acknowledged that the amount exceeded the budget allocated for the Town Hall projects. It was acknowledged that grant funding would need to be sought for some of the projects and budget may also need to be vired from other projects.

**2. Project Strategy/Status**

**To consider and discuss the Project Manager's Early Review Report along with the status and estimated budgets for each project**

- Members were referred to an early project report and project budget summary prepared by the Project Manager which also included costs for projects not included in the contractor brief. These included:
  - Costs for new flooring in the community rooms
  - ICT requirements
  - New gates and railings to secure the property

- Cllr Unwin highlighted that grant funding would need to be sought for some of these projects.
- Members thanked Mr Burns for a very useful document and accepted the report.

### **3. Pedestrian access Update (Back-up plan)**

#### **To discuss steps required to pursue the Northern Pedestrian Access route and to consider the alternative Southern Access option.**

- Project Manager, Mr Burns was invited to speak on this item.
- He explained that he accepted the formal decision of Council to pursue the Northern option for the creation of a new pedestrian access to the property but highlighted that due to the concerns expressed by the Local Authority, it was prudent to also investigate the alternative Southern option.
- Mr Burns explained that the property has benefitted from a right of access to the property from Sunnyside Road and the adjoining lanes for 40 years. He suggested that with this in mind, the Town Council may be able to use permitted development rights to create a pedestrian access on the Southern side of the building. He suggested that he could speak to BCBC to explore this option and report back to Council. Members agreed to this approach.
- Cllr Unwin highlighted two conditions imposed with the planning permission for the Linc Cymru development at Sunnyside. This included Condition 47 regarding a sign to be erected at the entrance to the development to highlight that the road is a private road and Condition 48 regarding a turning area. Cllr Unwin questioned whether these conditions would impact the development of a pedestrian entrance at the Southern side of the property.
- Mr Burns advised that he did not think that these conditions would impact the pedestrian access but he would check.
- Mr Burns offered his assistance in pursuing the planning permission for the Northern Access option.
- Town Clerk asked Members if they still wished her to seek an independent Planning Consultant for this work.
- It was noted that appointing an independent Planning Consultant could cost in the region of £1,200.
- Members supported accepting the offer from Mr Burns to undertake further investigations regarding the Northern Access, in the first instance.

### **4. Town & Community Fund Application**

- Cllr Unwin explained that applications for grant funding for the BCBC Town & Community Fund must be submitted by 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021. He suggested that some of the projects at the Town Hall may be eligible for funding, however costings would be required to accompany any application.
- It was noted that in recent years, funding has been directed to CAT projects and although the Town Hall was not a Capital Asset Transfer from BCBC, it does have a community focus.
- Mr Burns suggested two projects that could be considered:
  - The projects to replace the flooring and install a sink/refreshment area in the community rooms
  - The project to install a new archway, gate and railings around the community garden
- Mr Burns explained that the creation of the Town Hall will also provide additional community space at Carnegie House for the benefit of the local community.
- It noted that two quotes are required for the application.
- Members agreed that Mr Burns and the Town Clerk should prepare applications for both projects and that an item should be included on the agenda for the February Town Council meeting to seek approval to submit two applications to BCBC with a covering letter.
- Members discussed the match funding required for the projects and it was agreed that this could be taken from the budget already allocated to these projects.
- Cllr Burnett highlighted that there is funding available from Welsh Government to make buildings Covid safe. She suggested that the project to replace the carpet in the community rooms to a hard flooring surface that can be easily cleaned, may be an eligible project for this funding.

### **5. Garden & Tree Design/Maintenance/Boundary**

- Mr Burns was invited to speak on this matter. He asked Members to consider developing a plan for the garden design and maintenance. He explained that there are some important aspects of the trees and

hedgerows that need to be attended to and suggested that consideration could be given to appointing a horticulturist to plan this effectively. He suggested that fruit trees could be introduced to create a community garden.

- Cllr L Walters raised concerns about the work required to maintain fruit trees and suggested that in the first instance, the Town Council should focus on a plan to carry out maintenance work to existing trees and ground work.
- Members supported the idea of a community garden but did not agree that the Town Hall would be a suitable location.
- Cllr Unwin highlighted the need to focus on essential work to the inside of the building and suggested a three year plan to enhance the visual aspect of the outside area.
- It was noted that no work could be carried out to the trees and hedgerows during nesting season from March – September.
- It was suggested that the Community Engagement & Well-being Committee could consider the introduction of a gardening club at the Town Hall in the future.

#### **6. Linc Cymru development times**

- Members considered a Gantt Chart provided by the Project Manager illustrating provisional timings of projects and work at the Sunnyside development.
- Town Clerk advised Members that she had attended positive meetings with Linc Cymru and was being kept up-to-date with their plans and schedules of work.

#### **7. Finance & Time Planning**

- Members noted that the budgets for the Town Hall project would need to be discussed in detail when further quotes for work have been received.

#### **8. Any other business**

- There was no other business to discuss.

**Meeting Closed: 12.32pm**

### **APPENDIX A**

#### **Relevant extracts from Financial Regulations for Members information:**

This was inserted after the meeting by the Town Clerk for Members information.

Please note that Members should refer to the full Financial Regulations document for further information if necessary.

#### **BUDGETARY CONTROL AND AUTHORITY TO SPEND**

3.6 *Expenditure on revenue items may be authorised up to the amounts included for that class of expenditure in the approved budget. This authority is to be determined by:*

- *the Council for all items over £5,000;*
- *a duly delegated committee of the Council for items over £500; or*
- *the Clerk, in conjunction with Chairman of Council or Chairman of the appropriate committee, for any items below £500.*

*Such authority is to be evidenced by a minute or by an authorisation slip duly signed by the Clerk, and where necessary also by the appropriate Chairman.*

*Contracts may not be disaggregated to avoid controls imposed by these regulations.*

- 3.7 *No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Council, or duly delegated committee. During the budget year and with the approval of Council having considered fully the implications for public services, unspent and available amounts may be moved to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ('virement').*

AND

- 3.11 *No expenditure shall be authorised in relation to any capital project and no contract entered into or tender accepted involving capital expenditure unless the Council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and the requisite borrowing approval has been obtained.*
- 3.12 *All capital works shall be administered in accordance with the Council's standing orders and financial regulations relating to contracts.*

AND

## **9. ORDERS FOR WORK, GOODS AND SERVICES**

- 9.1. *An official order or letter shall be issued for all work, goods and services unless a formal contract is to be prepared or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained.*
- 9.2. *Order books shall be controlled by the RFO.*
- 9.3. *All members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure as far as reasonable and practicable that the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction, usually by obtaining three or more quotations or estimates from appropriate suppliers, subject to any de minimis provisions in Regulation 10.1 below.*
- 9.4. *A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the Council.*
- 9.5. *The RFO shall verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before the issue of any order, and in the case of new or infrequent purchases or payments, the RFO shall ensure that the statutory authority shall be reported to the meeting at which the order is approved so that the minutes can record the power being used.*

## **10. CONTRACTS**

- 10.1. *Procedures as to contracts are laid down as follows:*
- a. Every contract shall comply with these financial regulations, and no exceptions shall be made otherwise than in an emergency provided that this regulation need not apply to contracts which relate to items (i) to (vi) below:*
- i. for the supply of gas, electricity, water, sewerage and telephone services;*
  - ii. for specialist services such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants;*
  - iii. for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which consist of repairs to or parts for existing machinery or equipment or plant;*

- iv. *for work to be executed or goods or materials to be supplied which constitute an extension of an existing contract by the Council;*
- v. *for goods or materials proposed to be purchased which are proprietary articles and / or are only sold at a fixed price.*
- b. *The full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (“the Regulations”), as applicable, shall be followed in respect of the tendering and award of a public supply contract, public service contract or public works contract which exceed thresholds in The Regulations set by the Public Contracts Directive 2014/24/EU (which may change from time to time)<sup>1</sup>.*
- c. *When applications are made to waive financial regulations relating to contracts to enable a price to be negotiated without competition the reason shall be embodied in a recommendation to the Council.*
- d. *Such invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Clerk shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases. The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the Clerk in the ordinary course of post. Each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract.*
- e. *All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the Clerk in the presence of at least one member of Council.*
- f. *Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Orders[ ],<sup>2</sup> [insert reference of the Council’s relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.*
- g. *When it is to enter into a contract of less than £25,000<sup>3</sup> in value for the supply of goods or materials or for the execution of works or specialist services other than such goods, materials, works or specialist services as are excepted as set out in paragraph (a) the Clerk or RFO shall obtain 3 quotations (priced descriptions of the proposed supply); where the value is below £3,000 and above £100 the Clerk or RFO shall strive to obtain 3 estimates. Otherwise, Regulation 9.3 above shall apply.*
- h. *The Council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.*
- i. *Should it occur that the Council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the Council requires further pricing, provided that the specification does not change, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision making process was being undertaken.*

**For information:**

The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 can be viewed in full at:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukSI/2015/102/contents/made>

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<sup>1</sup> *Thresholds currently applicable are:*

*a. For public supply and public service contracts 209,000 Euros (£164,176)*

*b. For public works contracts 5,225,000 Euros (£4,104,394)*

<sup>2</sup> *Based on NALC’s model standing order 18d in Local Councils Explained © 2013 National Association of Local Councils*

<sup>3</sup> *This suggested figure is based on the sum above which special rules are applicable (under the Regulations) to Councils in England and is therefore considered an appropriate threshold.*