

Assets and Services Committee

Wednesday 15th February, 2023 at 2.30pm
Chambers, London Rd, Halesworth

Minutes

Present: Councillors;

Keith Greenberg (Chair), Anne Fleming, Joyce Moseley, Rosemary Lewis.

In Attendance: Nick Rees (Town Clerk), 0 members of public

1. **Apologies:** Cllrs; Peter Dutton, Maureen Took
2. **Declarations of interest:** None
3. **Minutes:** The minutes of the Assets and Services Committee meeting held on the 18th January, 2023 was accepted as a true record.
4. **Matters arising from the minutes.** None
5. **Work plan 2023:** The Committee received and noted the monthly review and recent updates.
6. **Community Hub:** Following the presentations held on the 7th February, it was noted that Rachel Leggett Associates (RLA) had been successful and had since been appointed to undertake the consultation. Three companies had then been contacted and after the initial introductory expressions of interest, all three had been invited to make a presentation. One had later withdrawn at short notice leaving two companies. The decision by the group (Cllrs; Greenberg, Moseley, Fleming and Jo McCallum of East Suffolk Council) to appoint RLA had been unanimous. The Clerk had written to confirm the appointment in accordance with the Council's agreement made at the monthly meeting in November, min ref: 81.13b (ii). In the meantime the Clerk would check the status of the planning application for Dairy Farm.
7. **London Rd Building:** HTC had approved the alterations and the budget at the monthly meeting on February 6th 2023 min ref: 85.10. The committee reviewed the Clerk's report and programme summarising the decisions needed to proceed. The Clerk explained the various options regarding the networking, file sharing, phones, electrics and builder's work. It was RESOLVED that the Committee approved the following actions, subject to receiving approval from East Suffolk Council (ESC) to proceed in the interim period between the agreement by ESC to transfer the assets (ESC's Cabinet meeting held on the 7th February) and the completion of the transfer and handover.
 - a) **Pre-application advice:** The Clerk had already started the process and would report back on when a meeting would take place.
 - b) **To install a commuter network:** To proceed with cable routing and supporting hardware to enable a local area network for 3 users in the Chambers Room all as previously quoted.
 - c) **Install new Electrics and Lighting:** To undertake lighting improvements in the Chambers room, Landing and Hall and replacement of strip lighting in the

Clerk's Office and to install additional sockets in the Chambers room and Clerk's Office all as previously quoted.

- d) **Office software and backups:** To purchase MS Office 365 for initially two users, £162 per annum, per user. This would require moving the clerk's email address and the creation of another email address. The Committee agreed that two council email addresses would be manageable but more would become confusing. The other users could still use the office programs but would save their documents under one of the two registered users. Councillors could also use a hot desk computer in the same way. The Clerk would manage the overall access and storage of files. It was agreed that the combination of cloud and hard copy storage would negate the need for a server.
- e) **To install a new phone system.** The Clerk had undertaken lots of research into the various phone options and it would appear that the BT solution, which also included a mobile phone and a virtual switchboard was the best solution. As it was an ongoing cost he would take this to the Finance & Governance Committee for final approval.
- f) **To contact local builders:** The Clerk would invite three local builders to price for the alterations to create a downstairs meeting room, improve the upstairs toilet and redecorate. They would also be asked to come up with a solution to create an additional downstairs toilet.

- 8. **Public Toilets:** The Clerk has been in contact several times with companies specialising in supplying and installing standalone public toilet pods but so far had been able to get any prices. The Clerk would hopefully have some more news for the next meeting.
- 9. **CCTV:** The Clerk reported that the recorder had been installed but the camera installation was temporarily on hold awaiting transfer of ownership. ESC had explained that from their perspective, installing CCTV cameras had recently become a very complicated process with auditing and everything needing to be connected to a central control room. As ESC did not own the cameras this would compound the problem. The Clerk would contact ESC to ask them to consider other interim options, suggested at the meeting, whilst the legal process was being completed.
- 10. **VAS:** The Clerk reported that the equipment had been delivered, but it was too heavy for lifting from a pair of steps so installation needed to be arranged. The Committee agreed he should contact Norse.
- 11. **Communications/News:** As reported under 7, ESC had formally agreed the transfer at the Cabinet meeting held on the 7th of February, although it was noted that the Clerk had only been notified verbally via the District Councillor. It was agreed the Clerk should revisit the need to appoint a solicitor to handle the legal process for Halesworth Town Council (HTC). Previously the Clerk had been in contact with some local solicitors and a firm recommended by Bungay Town Council.

The Committee agreed the Clerk should write to ESC formally to request the following:-

- a) A formal acknowledgment of the agreement to transfer the assets to HTC.
- b) The name and contact details for ESC's solicitor.
- c) Agreement or clarification on what works could be undertaken in the interim period as previously requested.
- d) An update on when the consumer boards would be upgraded to current regulations.
- e) A schedule of the stages, processes and timescales for the transfer

- 12. **Next meeting:** 15th March at 2.30pm