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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **Working Party established to oversee repairs to the Council's buildings**, held on **Wednesday 13th September 2017**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes** at **11:00am**.

PRESENT Cllrs S Catlin; M Chartier (*Chairman*); Dr G Mayhew; R Murray; S Murray, and R O'Keeffe

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Grant Crossley (*BLB Surveyors*); Ms Katie Winter and Sandy Scott (*LA Architects*)

BRepWP2017/01 ELECTION of CHAIRMAN:

Cllr Chartier was elected as Chairman of the Working Party for the 2017/18 municipal year.

BRepWP2017/02 QUESTIONS: There were none

BRepWP2017/03 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Apologies had been received from Cllr Milner who was working; Cllr Lamb who was unwell, and Cllr Rowell who cited another engagement.

BRepWP2017/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST: There were none.

BRepWP2017/05 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING: It was agreed to take as the first item of business the presentations from specialists regarding refurbishment of Malling Community Centre.

BRepWP2017/06 EXCLUSION of THE PRESS & PUBLIC:

At this point the Chairman moved, and **it was resolved that:**

BRepWP2017/06.1 "In view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted during the remainder of the meeting, pursuant to the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 etc. any members of the press or public present be excluded and instructed to withdraw. The nature of that business is to consider estimated costs and funding for proposed contracts."

BRepWP2017/07 REFURBISHMENT of MALLING COMMUNITY CENTRE:

The meeting welcomed Ms Katie Winter, Project Architect, and Mr Sandy Scott, Associate, of LA Architects; together with Grant Crossley, Project Manager for BLB Chartered Surveyors.

Ms Winter presented three layout plans which she had drafted according to the comprehensive brief, which had included the Council's position; the history and current status of the project and the proposed execution plan; together with supporting information such as the aspirations of the current and prospective users of the Centre who had responded to consultation, ranked according to importance. These options had differing emphasis between sports changing facilities and social areas such as multi-purpose rooms and café and terrace. Members acknowledged that a great deal of thought had obviously gone into production of these alternative layouts and were interested in the details. An initial favourite was identified, but it was noted that the past and prospective users of the centre may have other views, and each layout may offer significantly different attractiveness for prospective grant funding.

BLB had prepared a relevant Order of Costs for each design, which differed in estimated total cost by around £80,000 and all were initially indicated to exceed the originally-anticipated cost by a margin of over £130,000. It was acknowledged that BLB's Quantity Surveyor's assessment would routinely allow for the highest likely

cost for each element, and that these estimates would almost certainly prove substantially higher than the eventual final cost. There was a concern expressed regarding additional Value Added Tax and professional fees, but noted that the VAT would be reclaimable by Council as the project fell into the 'non-business' category as defined in the special VAT regime available to parish councils (*Value Added Tax Act 1994 s33*). Professional fees were already included in some elements of the scheme, and a significant component would be included within the tender prices ultimately submitted by building contractors.

Members noted that it had been accepted from the outset of the project that external funding would be required to complete it, and the Council's financial Reserve currently stood at £299,000. Third-party grants were likely to be available for particular elements of the design *eg* sports changing facilities; community rooms, or energy conservation measures. It was also noted that once operational management plans were developed for the Centre, some costs may be offset *eg* by contributions from catering franchisees. The Council always had the option to resort to borrowing at extremely favourable fixed rates of interest from the Public Works Loans Board, repayable over periods of two to fifty years.

Members considered salient points of these issues, and agreed that a meeting to consider the detail of the Quantity Surveyor's estimates, assisted by Mr Crossley, would be helpful. This would be scheduled as soon as possible, and following that the designs would be presented to the public at a following meeting to be held at the Centre.

The specialist advisers were thanked for their interesting presentation and helpful contributions to the meeting.

BRepWP2017/08

UPDATE ON WORKS TO THE TOWN HALL:

It was reported that the re-roofing of the Corn Exchange was progressing well, although significant additional repairs needed had been identified in the course of this work, once slates and old covering materials were removed or exposed. This was acknowledged as inevitable, as pre-commencement assessment of the scope of work required had only been possible by remote inspection through binoculars or camera 'long-lens'. Items urgently needing attention included 18 timber window sub-frames; lead valley gutters and drip-trays; three substantial chimney structures, and iron rainwater goods (downpipes and gutters). The contractor had prepared a schedule of these items with an estimate of costs, which had been received only as the meeting was about to commence. This meant that only cursory reading had been possible but Members were interested to hear the headings and summary cost elements. The comprehensive document identified some optional elements which could offer substantial savings, but it appeared that the overall total would be between £40,000 and 55,000.

It was understood that these costs were estimated on the presumption that they would be carried out concurrently with remaining re-covering work – utilizing existing scaffolding and with unfettered access to all damaged areas. Deferral would add cost *eg* replacement scaffolding and/or removal and replacement of recently-laid covering materials, and leave the building vulnerable. Members would consider this in more detail, but TC undertook to begin the process of application for consent to works to a listed building, assuming that the need for the work would be accepted.

BRepWP2017/09

CONCLUSIONS:

The Working Party would meet again shortly to review detail of Quantity Surveyor's estimates. Additional repairs needed at the Town Hall would be assessed and a recommendation presented to Council.

BRepWP2017/10

There being no further business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed, and thanked everyone for their attendance.

The meeting closed at 12:35pm

Signed

date