

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of the

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL

Monday, 9th April 2018, at 7.30pm

Present: Cllrs Geoffrey Andrews, John Bloxsom, Alice Campbell, Kevin Cranston (Chair), Rob Green, Camilla Hale, Sarah Lunnon, John Marjoram, Steven Naumann, Margaret Poulton, Alan Sage and Lucas Schoemaker.

In attendance: Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk), Kate Montgomery (Deputy Clerk).

Action

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Cllrs Simon Arundel, Laurie Davies, Steve Dechan, Vanessa Price, Haydn Sutton and Chas Townley (all personal).

2. Declarations of interest and requests for dispensation.

Cllr Marjoram declared a personal interest in agenda item 4 as a member of Stroud District Council. It was noted that the dispensation granted to him on 30th October 2017 remains in force.

3. Questions from members of the public

There were no questions.

4. Subscription Rooms

The Mayor summarised a report and recommendations from the Sub Rooms working group. It was noted that Stroud District Council Task and Finish Group's report to Stroud District Council's Strategy and Resources Committee on 12th April recommends that authority should be delegated:

“to the Head of Property Services in consultation with the Director of Customer Services and Group Leaders to agree terms for a transfer of the Subscription Rooms and forecourt to Stroud Town Council subject to a report back to Strategy and Resources Committee for approval.”

The report also includes a recommendation that Stroud District Council should complete repair works identified in a 2017 structural survey, which estimated the cost of the works at £156,000. It was noted that the cost might be more than this.

There was a discussion about whether a transfer would mean offering a lease or the freehold. Concern was expressed about the timescales proposed in the report, in particular the requirement to apply for Listed

Building Consent by the end of May 2018 and in advance of a final decision from the Strategy and Resources Committee. Of greater concern was the expectation that the business would transfer by the end of August 2018, which was felt to be unrealistic given the need to recruit trustees and set up a new organisation.

The Strategy and Resources report also suggests that Stroud Town Council will underwrite the finances of the new trust which is incorrect – the plan remains to provide a grant only.

Members felt that the priorities should be: keeping the building in public ownership, recruiting trustees and managing staff transfers. A suitable transition period would be needed to allow this to happen and to complete due diligence tasks.

It was noted that the Leader of Stroud District Council, Cllr Cornell had made a very positive press statement about working in partnership with the Town Council and this was welcomed.

It was also noted that a reduced subsidy for the Sub Rooms is being forecast for 2017–18, but accounts had not yet been finalised.

It was **resolved** to delegate the negotiation of a transfer of either the freehold or the leasehold of the Sub Rooms, including the forecourt to the Clerk, in consultation with the Sub Rooms Working Group, with a requirement to report back to full Town Council for approval of terms, subject to due diligence including:

- provision of data on advance bookings,
- provision of data on staff liabilities (TUPE),
- provision of historic accounts for the Sub Rooms,
- confirmation of the inclusion of fixtures and fittings in the transfer,
- review of business plan (adjusting for any change in the transition period) in partnership with Stroud District Council,
- review of timescales,
- urgent Stroud District Council decision on the future of the Tourist Information Centre (the Council remain willing to discuss options for future operation),
- the new Trust structure being established according to what is best suited to the business.

The Clerk was requested to write to Stroud District Council’s Strategy and Resources Committee explaining this decision; setting out expectations regarding building repairs, timescales and grant funding; and correcting the misunderstanding about financial underwriting.

The meeting closed at 8.50pm

Chair

Date

ExtraCouncil/9/4/2018