

COMMITTEE: FINANCE POLICY & RESOURCES

DATE: 21 JUNE 2010

PURPOSE: TO CONSIDER THE SPECIFICATION AND COSTS OF THE REFURBISHMENT OF THE PUBLIC TOILETS IN VICARAGE FIELD

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Resolve to recommend that the Council:

- a) Reviews the refurbishment project in light of the projected cost of the works to satisfy the Council's specification.
- b) Confirms how to finance any additional cost of the works beyond the original budget of £60,000 if required.

1. Background:

- 1.1 At the Council meeting held on 20th April 2009, members resolved to adopt the report presented to the meeting (copy attached), delegate the Finance Policy and Resources Committee to forward the project to completion, and delegate the Chairman of Finance Policy and Resources Committee and Town Clerk to prepare proposals, plans and tenders for submission to the FP & R Committee for consideration and approval (Minute htc/08/4x/521 refers)
- 1.2 At the Finance Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 30th November 2009, members resolved that the Council signed the lease for the public conveniences in Vicarage Field and proceeded with the project to be financed from commuted sums. (Minute FPR/09/3/216.2 refers)
- 1.3 At the Council meeting held on 15 March 2010 members resolved to proceed with the project with a budget of £60,000, and delegated the responsibility of selecting the consultant to the Chairmen of the Council and Committees.
- 1.4 At a meeting of the Chairmen held on 29 March 2010, Hamson Partnership was selected to carry out the project management of the refurbishment.

2. Building Condition and Survey

- 2.1 Following the appointment of the consultants a survey was conducted to establish the cost of refurbishment to the specification agreed by the Council.
- 2.2 The survey established that Wealden District Council had not previously carried out an asbestos survey of the building, which would be required as the building was likely to contain asbestos products, having being built in the 1960's. With the agreement of Wealden District Council an asbestos survey was carried out by a specialist company. (A full report on the findings is available for inspection at the Town Council Offices)
- 2.3 The consultant has now provided a proposed plan of the refurbishment with costings that is attached to this report for information. The plan incorporates all the requirements as agreed by Council together with the need to make some external repairs and deal with the removal of asbestos in certain areas.

2.4 A meeting between Hamson Partnership Liz Jones Town Clerk and Mickey Caira Deputy Town Clerk took place to discuss the proposed plan and cost implications. It was clear that it would be impossible to reduce the estimated total cost of refurbishment from £112,034 to the allocated budget of £60,000, and deliver any form of refurbishment to meet the public's expectations of a modern, clean and welcoming facility.

2.5 The major factors affecting the higher than anticipated cost of the project include:

- The removal of asbestos products.
- The very poor state of the current facility.
- Provision of baby change facility.
- The cost of vandal resistant sanitary ware.

3. Financial Implications

3.1 The budget provision of £60,000 has been allocated from the Commuted Sum Account. The Council has limited funds to call upon for any emergencies or other projects not budgeted for in its annual budget. The current balance of the Commuted Sums Account is £217,200 of which the £60,000 has been allocated. In addition the Council has £37,500 in its contingency fund.

3.2 Allocating any further funds from either the Commuted Sums Account or Contingency Fund would significantly reduce the Council's ability to deal with any financial emergency situation, and severely restrict the Council's ability to support other projects in the future.

4. Environmental Implications

4.1 The refurbishment of the toilets will produce a major positive effect on the local environment.

5. Health & Safety Implications:

5.1 There are health and safety implications in terms of the need to remove the asbestos as part of the refurbishment.

5.2 The existence of asbestos in the toilets may force the current owners Wealden District Council to close the toilets if the Town Council do not move forward with this project to refurbish the buildings.

6. Conclusions:

6.1 The higher than anticipated cost of the refurbishment requires a review of the project to establish if the Council wishes to proceed with its required specification, or accept a much reduced refurbishment that will not meet the aspirations of the public, or to withdraw from the project completely.

6.2 Confirms how to finance any additional cost of the works beyond the original budget of £60,000 if required.

Further information in respect of this report can be obtained from Mickey Caira (telephone: 01323 445736 / email: mickey.cairal@hailsham-tc.gov.uk).