



SANDBACH
Town Council

ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Agenda for the meeting to be held on Wednesday, **10th July 2024**
at **7.00pm** in **Sandbach Town Hall**.

Committee Members: Cllrs L Crane (Chair), D Hegarty (Vice Chair), J Arnold, J Beddows, K England, R Gray, S Broad, D Poole, M Hough, N Cook, Cllr A Nevitt (ex-officio).

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence made directly to the Clerk **by 5pm** at the latest please on the day of the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To provide an opportunity for Members and Officers to declare pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests in relation to any item on the agenda.

3. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider items that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for any items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

Lead: Chair

Action: *To approve any items to be excluded from press and public, if appropriate.*

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

The meeting Chair will adjourn the meeting to allow questions relating to items on this Agenda from members of the public.

After the questions, the Chair will reconvene the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 10TH APRIL 2024.

[Attached: Draft minutes of the meeting]

Lead: Chair

Action: *To approve the minutes of the Assets & Services Committee meeting held 10th April 2024 as an accurate record.*

5. ASSET MAINTENANCE UPDATE & PROPOSALS

[Attached: Report from the Chief Officer]

Lead: Chair

Action:

- i) To note the significant progress across the Council's asset portfolio;
- ii) To approve rewiring the Market Store at a maximum cost of £8,000 funded from the Maintenance Earmarked Reserve, and delegated to the Chief Officer to implement;
- iii) To endorse the removal of toilet and sink in the Town Hall 'green room' at a cost of £475, with the remainder of the work to remove the wall to be undertaken by the Facilities Manager in order to maximise necessary storage space;
- iv) To approve a payment of £1,800 for a replacement hot water cylinder in the ballroom toilets to be funded from the current year annual maintenance budget;
- v) Recommend to Council that the application of use of Maintenance Earmarked Reserve is delegated to the A&S Committee to a limit of £10K in order to streamline approvals.

6. MARKET MODERNISATION REPLACEMENT GAZEBOS

[Link: Previous report from the Chief Officer <https://sandbach.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Market-Modernisation-Gazebos.pdf>]

Lead: Chair

Action: To purchase the remaining single gazebos (as outlined in the approval last year) at a maximum cost of £12,000, funded from the earmarked reserve for this purpose and to allow the further reduction of operating costs.

7. TOWN HALL / MARKET OPERATIONAL UPDATE

[Verbal update from Chief Officer]

Lead: Chief Officer

Action: To receive a verbal update on current issues and performance.

8. RANGER / OPEN SPACES WORKING GROUP

[Attached: Report from the Chief Officer]

Lead: Chair

Action:

- i) Note the position;
- ii) Recommend to Council to approve the suggested approach to the open spaces working group membership and identify members.

9. HERBAL GARDEN UPGRADE

[Attached: Report from the Chief Officer]

Lead: Chair

Action:

- i) Consider the options to upgrade the Herb Garden on Penda Way

- ii) Approve an upgrade, to be funded from the Ranger Services budget underspend.

10. TRANSIT VAN REPLACEMENT

[Attached: Report from the Chief Officer]

Lead: Chair

Action: That the Committee recommends to Council:

- i) that the Market Transit Van is disposed of and replaced with a new model, subject to a successful trial run;
- ii) That the purchase of the new Van is delegated to the Chief Officer up to a maximum net cost of £15K, after accounting for disposal income, to be funded from the earmarked reserve and balance from general reserves.

11. ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA FOR PUBLICITY

Lead: Chair

Action: *To approve items for publicity.*

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Lead: Chair

Action: *To approve items for future meetings.*

13. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place at 7pm on 9th October 2024 in the Town Hall Ball Room.

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SANDBACH
Town Council

ASSETS AND SERVICES COMMITTEE

Minutes for the meeting to be held on Wednesday, **10th April 2024**
at **7.00pm** in **Sandbach Town Hall**.

Members Present: Cllrs K Flavell (Chair), D Hegarty (Vice Chair), J Arnold, K England, R Gray, D Poole, C Crane (Town Mayor)
Cllr Wheatcroft as a guest.

Committee Clerk: Ceri Lloyd Chief Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Cllrs J Beddows, M Mitchell and A Nevitt. Cllr MacGregor was absent without apology.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No pecuniary & non-pecuniary interests in relation to any item on the agenda were declared.

3. ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED IN THE ABSENCE OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider items that, under the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 (as extended by s.100 of the Local Government Act 1972), the public and accredited representatives of newspapers be excluded from the meeting for any items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by virtue of the paragraph specified against the item.

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *No items were excluded from press and public.*

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

No members of the press or public were present at the meeting.

4. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 31ST JANUARY 2024.

[Attached: Draft minutes of the meeting]

Lead: Chair

Action: *The minutes of the Assets & Services Committee meeting held 31st January 2024 were approved as an accurate record.*

5. ASSETS & SERVICES COMMITTEE 2023-24 BUDGET

[Attached: RBS 2023-24 Budget & Actuals March Summary]

Lead: Chair

The Chief Officer confirmed that the year end figures were pointing to an underspend overall. She also highlighted the Council's aim to significantly reduce the combined net cost of the Indoor and Outdoor Market due to more effective management and marketing over the past 2 years.

Resolved: *the actuals against budget position for Assets & Services Committee activities were noted.*

6. TOWN HALL STONE MASONRY

[Attached: Chief Officer Report]

Lead: Chair

The Committee welcomed this proposal which had arisen from the energy efficiency work currently being undertaken. The Chief Officer clarified that once the survey was done this would potentially lead to a formal procurement process for some significant additional restoration work. Cllr Wheatcroft confirmed that the current supplier was sourced through the Building Conservation Directory for skilled suppliers, recommended by Historic England. It was noted that this work would need to be carried out in consultation with the Operations and Events Manager to mitigate disruption. The Chief Officer was asked to ensure positive and informative publicity would be made at the appropriate time.

Resolved: *the immediate stone masonry repair work identified to be commissioned at a cost of £2,177 (excluding VAT) and a masonry condition survey to be undertaken at a cost of £3,485 (excluding VAT) asap, both by StoneCentral, funded by the Town Hall Maintenance earmarked reserve, was approved.*

7. TOWN HALL COMPLEX - ENERGY EFFICIENCY AUDIT

[Attached: Chief Officer Report; Utility Aid Energy Efficiency Audit Report - emailed separately to members]

Lead: Chair

The item was introduced by Cllr Wheatcroft who had organised this much needed review in the context of his role as Climate Change lead. The Committee welcomed the report and thanked Cllr Wheatcroft for his initiative. The Chief Officer confirmed that many aspects of the report would be essential in continuing to develop the Council's asset maintenance strategy in a sustainable way. The Committee accepted the proposal that a potential project to install solar panels, subject to the CEC heritage officer approval, should be developed for consideration by Council.

Resolved:

- i) *the contents of this report were noted;*
- ii) *suggested improvements are explored further by the Chief Officer's office, in consultation with Cllr Wheatcroft, for future consideration and approval where appropriate, as part of a sustainable asset development programme;*
- iii) *a project specification, funded by the Climate Change Earmarked Reserve, is drawn up for consideration by Council (authority to apply this*

reserve already delegated to the Chief Officer in consultation with CC lead).

8. SMALL COMMON BARRIER

[Attached: Chief Officer Report; Quotation]

Lead: Chair / Cllr D Hegarty

Cllr Hegarty introduced the item and outlined the process of a small group of officers, himself and Cllr Poole considering alternatives as agreed at the last meeting. Cllr Poole was out of the country for the second of 2 meetings held. There was a robust discussion about the ultimate proposal to replace the bollards with a more substantial and highly visible crash barrier. Cllr Flavell confirmed that the remit of this committee was to consider a replacement for the original bollards, as the car park refurbishment was agreed by Council, and not to attempt to redesign the scheme. An alternative proposal to replace the bollards with a stainless steel frame fell without a seconder. It was agreed that the proposed barrier should be installed after consulting the CEC conservation officer and ensuring that a clear explanation was provided to remind residents the importance of the barrier in that location to improve safety by limiting dangerous parking opportunities and discouraging heavy load vehicles reversing in front of the adjacent shops. The Chief Officer confirmed there was a significant underspend against the original budget from this scheme.

Resolved:

- i) *the research done was noted;*
- ii) *the bollards to be replaced by the recommended crash barrier, subject to the reassurance of the CEC Conservation Officer that no environmental issues would arise from such a design in that location, funded from the small common car park underspend, was approved.*

9. RANGER / PUBLIC REALM UPDATE

[Verbal report from the Chief Officer]

Lead: Chair

The Chief Officer updated the committee regarding various public realm developments. The 3 weed sprays had been commissioned. ANSA had recommended no additional intervention for the cobbles as they felt this would do more harm than good. A 'friends of the cobbles' group was suggested and a polite request to businesses to use (sustainable) plastic outside pubs to prevent safety hazard. The Chief Officer confirmed an imminent meeting with ANSA to secure the bought in part time ranger service now approved by Council.

Resolved: *the verbal update on progress to date was noted.*

10. TOWN HALL / MARKET UPDATE

[Verbal update from Chief Officer]

Lead: Chief Officer

The Chief Officer highlighted the recent report to all members from the Operations and Events Senior Manger which had highlighted the various developments circulated the previous week. Various marketing strategies were now being implemented and were having an impact. For eg. 42 market traders

now listed which is the highest number in recent years, at the lowest net cost to the tax payer. The Chief Officer confirmed that the new gazebos were due to be delivered. It was also noted that sadly the cinema operator was retiring imminently and that the Council was hoping to find a replacement asap.

The Committee requested that the Council Team be formally thanked for their hard work and successful endeavours.

Resolved:

- i) a verbal update on current issues and performance
- ii) the Committee thanked the team for their hard work

11. ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA FOR PUBLICITY

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *Masonry; Town Hall / Market events; progress on markets business model.*

12. ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Lead: Chair

Resolved: *None specified*

13. DATE, TIME AND PLACE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is to be confirmed at Council AGM.

Meeting closed

Sandbach Town Council Assets & Services Committee

Asset Maintenance and Improvement Update

Market Store

The market store is an invaluable part of the Town Council's Asset portfolio. It has however been under used in the past. Last year, Council made a decision not to use it for office and corporate use due to the prohibitive cost and limits on sufficient floor area for the conversion to this purpose. The admin has since been rehoused very effectively in the Sandbach Enterprise Centre and the Town Hall complex is released for its original purpose – particularly the BoardRoom which is now very popular with hirers in the community.

As a result of this, over the past few months, the Facilities Manager has been implementing the strategy to ensure the Council's assets are achieving their potential and is in the process of refitting the Market Store with fit for purpose shelving, storage systems, a lockable workshop and further potential office space. This has been achieved at very low cost, partly funded by the disposal of scrap metal (income £210) and recycling much of the materials already available eg. old market stall wooden table tops etc.

This refurbishment is part of a wider review of storage across the whole town hall / market complex which will result in more effective use of assets, more efficient systems and ultimately lower costs through saved time and increased income.

Part of this refurbishment has included an electrical review and it is necessary to re wire the store to ensure it meets minimum safety standards. No such work has taken place previously and it is therefore necessary to invest appropriately to bring the Store up to standard.

The cost of the necessary rewiring is approximately £8,000 based on quotes received so far and it is proposed this work is carried out asap and funded from the Maintenance Earmarked Reserve.

Further plans include restructuring the small front rooms into one larger office space which will potentially serve as a Town Council presence / 'reception' in the town and will accommodate the Ranger and potentially the Market Officer and casual staff.

The transformation of the Store is impressive and Members are invited to visit by appointment if they would like to see the work being done.

Town Hall

Maintenance and improvements are also progressing in the Town Hall.

Masonry Maintenance

It can be seen from the front of the Town Hall that the frontage has had all damaged stone work removed. We await the outcome of the survey carried out recently which will itemise and provide an estimated cost for all of the work required. Council will need to review, prioritise and programme the work being proposed and this will be the subject of a future report. We are also meeting a heritage expert for proposals for the ornamental and operationally important round window in the Ball Room (above the stage). Again quotations are being sought.

The Green Room

As part of the 2015 Town Hall transformation, a Green Room was created to support activities in the Ball Room, which is behind the stage. This is fitted with a toilet and sink. In reality this has never really been used for the purpose intended at it is felt that this would be much better use as a larger store / office for activities such as weddings and the forthcoming Youth Club equipment. It is proposed that the Toilet and sink is removed in the first instance at a cost of £475 plus VAT. This is within the delegated authority limit of the Chief Officer against the annual maintenance budget. The additional work to remove the inner (false) wall and move the doorway will be carried out by the Facilities Manger.

Ball Room Improvements

The stage curtain has been replaced with much smarter and more practical doors. New tables with appropriate safety catches are in place. The sound system has become wireless and centrally operated to avoid damage to speakers etc. New Mics, and replacement chairs are being considered and will be brought to Council for consideration. Quotes are being obtained to repair and upgrade the electric blinds system which is now faltering and not fit for purpose for commercial and community events. A short term fix will be put in place pending the development of longer term options and the need to programme any masonry work in advance.

All works are funded from the annual maintenance and equipment budgets and / or the earmarked reserves for larger one off projects. This is specified for each approval.

Shop Units

The broken front window (butchers blade) was unfortunate but was quickly repaired with safety glass at a cost of £275 and additional CCTV has been ordered. The front gate locking system is being reviewed but the gates are not easily upgraded for a modern solution!

Small Common Car Park

Following approval earlier this year, the new barrier is being implemented on Thursday 11th July. The ponding fault is being fixed at the end of July which is under guarantee and will require closure of the car park (and some relocation on the market day) for 7 days.

Funding Capital Maintenance

Financial Regs stipulate application of reserves (general and earmarked) should be approved by Council. It is suggested that this is delegated to the Assets and Services Committee for the application of the maintenance earmarked reserve for works up to a limit of £10K. This will take the burden off the Council agenda and allow more streamlined decision making for this purpose.

Recommended that:

- i) the significant progress across the Council's asset portfolio is noted;
- ii) Rewiring the Market Store at a cost of £8,000 funded from the Maintenance Earmarked Reserve and delegated to the Chief Officer to implement up to this amount is approved;
- iii) The removal of toilet and sink in the Town Hall 'green room' at a cost of £475, with the remainder of the work to remove the wall to be undertaken by the Facilities Manager in order to maximise necessary storage space, is endorsed;

- iv) Recommend to Council that the application of use of Maintenance Earmarked Reserve is delegated to the A&S Committee to a limit of £10K in order to streamline approvals.

CL 4.7.24

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Sandbach Town Council Assets & Services Committee 10 July 2024

Ranger Services Update / Open Spaces Working Group

Background

The Town Council currently has a budget of £40,000 for ranger / public realm services within the 2024-25 budget. This was made up of estimated costs of £25K part time ranger and a 'contingency' of £15,000 for matters arising from the outcome of the CEC green spaces review which were unclear at the time of budget setting.

The Town Council resolved to commission a part time Ranger from ANSA which is due to start in the near future, subject to an appointment process, which will be managed through a 2 year Service Level Agreement between ANSA and the Council, at a cost of £32K per annum. This leaves £8K per year for additional services and / or projects.

In 2024-25, there is a part year effect as the Ranger will start part way through the financial year and is likely to cost approximately £20K, leaving a balance of £20K for other work in the current year.

In addition, the Council can commission specific and specialised ranger / public realm services, as and when required, and to target particular public realm issues or improvements across all wards.

Delivery of Service

As outlined in the SLA, the service should cover the following themes and the Council should expect outcomes accordingly:

- To deliver a baseline standard of weeding and tidy town – particularly but not exclusively the town centre as the business and visitor centre of the town
- To work with the town's various volunteer groups such as the Clean Team, Wildlife and Walkways and the Sandbach Partnership to collaborate over public realm improvements
- To advise and help deliver open space projects as identified and approved by the Council
- To provide a broad annual programme of public realm maintenance and improvement projects for the purposes of tracking and reporting progress and to ensure successes are publicised consistently on the website and through social media

Approach to Strategic and Operational Management

In line with the Council's scheme of delegation, the ANSA ranger SLA will be managed directly by the Chief Officer, supported and supplemented by the Facilities Manager for the purposes of operational management of this role and its output.

It is proposed that the system originally set up for member requests shall be reinstated and 'triaged' by the Chief Officer in the first instance.

In addition, the Council resolved some time ago to set up a Parks and Open Spaces Working Group, but due to staff absence and other issues this did not materialise. It is proposed that this group is now set up with a view to providing strategic and co-ordinated advice to the Assets & Services Committee with regard to the Council's strategy on all open spaces across all wards. It

is suggested that the Group should be made up of at least one Councillor for each ward and consist of no more than 6 members to make it a manageable group. The group will be supported by the Chief Officer and will also be attended by the Ranger and the Facilities Manager as a core with others (internal and external to the Council) invited as appropriate.

The Group will determine its terms of reference but in overall terms it will be required to make researched proposals to the A&S committee and / or Council for public realm projects and how they might be prioritised.

The overall programme and update will be reported to A&S Committee each cycle

Recommended:

- 1) Note the position;
- 2) Recommend to Council to approve the suggested approach to the open spaces working group membership and identify members.

CL 1/4/24

Sandbach Town Hall Assets & Services Committee 10 July 2024

Town Centre Herb Garden Upgrade

Background

The Community Herb Garden, located on Penda Way, was developed some time ago through a partnership with the Rotary Clubs, the Allotment Society and the Town Council. This is a significant feature of the town centre particularly for shoppers and bus users. Unfortunately it is no longer maintained in any consistent way and would benefit from an upgrade to brighten up this part of the Town Centre.

As a result, the Town Council have made enquiries with Rotary members and other local contacts regarding the status of this feature, and there is no longer any funding to provide the necessary maintenance.

Proposed Improvements

ANSA have been approached for a quote to upgrade the herb bed which would involve clearing the current bed, providing new soil and replanting. ANSA have suggested that more impact and less maintenance could be achieved with a floral display which would be maintained over each season, rather than a herb bed which is less attractive but does of course provide herbs.

The Town Council's Facilities Manager is able to address issues with the stonework and signage which has also become damaged and untidy and requires upgrade.

The ANSA quotes for their suggested approach are provided below:

To carry out work on the Herb bed listed below, planting an herb bed most herbs will die back in the winter, so the bed would not look great all year, so I have given you another option, planting out like the big roundabout, with grasses and lavenders perennials and bulbs giving all year round colour, this would cost more as the plants are more expensive:

Herb bed

- *Remove all out plants.*
- *Top up with new compost.*
- *Supply new plants lavenders and herbs.*
- *Plant out bed.*
- *Remove all waste from site.*

Cost £747.89 +vat

Grasses and Lavenders Perennials and Bulbs

- *Remove all out plants.*
- *Top up with new compost.*
- *Supply new plants Perennials, Grasses, Bulbs.*
- *Plant out bed.*
- *Remove all waste from site.*

Cost £1,096.59+vnt

Annual Maintenance

The cost of annual maintenance would be £200 to be added to the Town Council's current floral contract with ANSA, and would come within the current budget provision.

Funding

It is proposed that if approved this work is funded from the current year Ranger budget which is underspent due to an in year start date for the commissioned Ranger.

Recommended;

That the Committee:

- i) Consider the options to upgrade the Herb Garden on Penda Way
- ii) Approve an upgrade, to be funded from the Ranger Services budget underspend.

Sandbach Town Council Assets & Services Committee 10 July 2024

Replacement Transit Van

Background

The Town Council is going through a process of modernising its operations which involves rationalising and improving its use of assets. The Council's original vehicle stock is set out below:

- 1) Market Transit Van
- 2) 2 Trailers
- 3) Market Fork Lift Truck
- 4) Ranger Van

Last year, the Council approved the disposal of the Fork Lift Truck, as it was no longer required following a review of market set up processes, and this achieved a capital receipt of £5K.

Transit Van Replacement

The remaining market van is a Ford Transit with 104,000 miles on the clock and is 17 years old. It was purchased by the Council in 2011, and it has averaged approximately 600 miles per year whilst in the Council's ownership. The current MOT is valid until 9th October 2024. There are 27 advisories on the last MOT certificate. Many are corrosion of bodywork, brake pipes etc. and the braking system is barely adequate. The mechanic who past it last October advised that it would not pass this year without substantial repair work being completed.

It is recommended therefore that this Transit Van is now replaced, to avoid uneconomic repair costs, with a newer vehicle which supports the revised operating model which relies on fewer operatives.

The Facilities Manager has carried out research for a suitable alternative, in consultation with the Events and Operations Manager, who has overall responsibility for the market operation.

As a result of this work it is proposed that the specific features required are:-

- Luton body
- XLB (extra long wheelbase)
- Twin rear wheels
- Tail Lift

The preferred model has the extra long wheelbase, which means it has the same length as the trailer (which currently holds all the gazebos that are required for the normal market set up).

The Luton van is a square box van which maximises the carrying capacity in height and width. The gazebos would stay permanently loaded in the van except when unloaded for market use.

The double rear wheels provide the additional strength and load carrying capacity as bulk gazebos are heavy.

The tail lift provides ease of operating. Lifting a gazebo on and off a trailer is very hard work and requires two operatives to lift each gazebo. The tail lift removes the need for lifting, so each gazebo could be loaded by a single operative.

The ranger van is currently totally unused for the market operation, but with the new system on market day it would be used to move 40 trestle tables from the store to the market + return. The trestle tables are very quick and easy for a single operative to handle. The Ranger Van is relatively new and it makes sense to retain it for the foreseeable future for general Council use.

This model would also allow the disposal of the 2 trailers (which require a specific driving licence) and this would release valuable space in the Market Store for more efficient use.

Trial Run

The Facilities Manager has made arrangements to hire this vehicle model on 17th July in order to test the new operation, in advance of any purchase, to ensure it meets the Council's requirements before committing the investment.

Cost of Replacement

Research suggests the preferred vehicle would cost in the region of £15,000. The disposal of Trailers and scrap van would raise a capital receipt of approximately £1,000.

Funding

The Council has provided an earmarked reserve of £10K for replacement vehicles. It is proposed that this is used for the purchase of the van with the remainder being met from general reserves.

Recommended: That the Committee recommends to Council:

- i) that the Market Transit Van is disposed of and replaced with a new model, subject to a successful trial run;
- ii) That the purchase of the Van is delegated to the Chief Officer up to a maximum net cost of £15K to be funded from the earmarked reserve and balance from general reserves.

CL / SH 3.7.24