

STROUD TOWN COUNCIL  
**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Finance and Policy Committee  
25<sup>th</sup> February 2021**

**Present**

Councillors Simon Arundel, Kevin Cranston, Rob Green John Marjoram (from item 4), Stella Parkes and Alan Sage (from item 4) (Chair)

**Absent**

Cllrs Camilla Hale and Chas Townley

**In attendance**

Helen Bojaniwska (Town Clerk)

In the absence of the Chair and Deputy Chair Cllr Cranston was elected to Chair the meeting.

**1. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Lucas Schoemaker (personal)

**2. Declarations of interest or requests for dispensations**

There were no declarations of interest or requests for dispensations.

**3. Questions from the public**

There were no questions.

**4. Thanet House refurbishment**

Cllrs Sage and Marjoram joined the meeting. Cllr Sage took the Chair.

The Clerk presented costings for planned refurbishment and carbon reduction projects at Thanet House. It was noted that an application to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund had not been successful.

It was generally felt that the cost of the works was not justified by the potential benefits in terms of providing improved space for staff and council meetings.

The Committee explored potential alternatives, including renting space for staff elsewhere and moving to alternative premises. It was noted that any other properties likely to come on the market would also require significant retrofitting.

It was noted that Council meetings could be held in other venues, but legislation required that licensed premises, for example the Subscription Rooms, could not be used unless no other alternative were available.

It was noted that regardless of COVID-19 related concerns, the Council has a duty to provide a decent quality and safe working environment, with proper ventilation. Whilst some staff could potentially continue to spend some of their time at home

once restrictions are lifted, in the near future the office space would need to be adapted to provide COVID-safe workspaces.

The Clerk had consulted with staff and noted that the space in the upper floors could be adapted for office space and storage without significant expense. Smaller meetings could continue to be held on the ground floor with some reorganisation of the space to support social distancing, but larger committee meetings and full Council meetings would need to be held elsewhere.

It was **agreed** to progress planning and listed building applications for: change of use of the upper floors from residential to office, minor works to bring this space into use and carbon reduction works previously identified.

**Action:** Clerk to submit planning and listed building applications

It was **agreed** to authorise the Clerk to progress the minor works from existing budgets and to continue to seek grant or other funding for the carbon reduction works.

**Action:** progress minor works and seek funding for carbon reduction works.

**Action:** Clerk to check the position regarding service of notice on the flats.

The meeting closed at 20.10pm.

Chair .....

Date .....