

Report No. 3 MTC FC 23.4.19 – Proposed Changes to the Current Committee Structure

1. Situation

1.1 P&R has considered a number of recent and likely future changes to the responsibilities of Malmesbury Town Council (MTC).

In particular:

1.1.1 MTC is about to take on sole responsibility for the Tetbury Hill Cemetery following the termination of the Parish's involvement with the Joint Burial Committee. Some significant decisions are required in respect of the Cemetery. These include how the cemetery extension area will be operated, if new services such as green burials and additional remembrance opportunities might be offered, pricing, the development of an environmental management policy and so on.

1.1.2 MTC has taken over responsibility for two play parks from Wiltshire Council – Filands and Newton Grove in the last 18 months. This means MTC is now responsible for five play parks. TH&F has identified that significant work is required to establish effective management, maintenance and development plans for these parks.

1.1.3 The Town Hall has become a more complicated and challenging resource to manage. The addition of a new sound and light system in the Assembly Room means more focus must be placed on generating additional revenue and managing bookings. There are also a number of development and refurbishments projects associated with the Town Hall, including the installation of new public toilets in a redundant annex, we want to progress. At the same time aspects of Town Hall management – notably the operation of the John Bowen gallery and the TIC - is undertaken by Community and Town Promotion Committee, which can lead to overlap and complexity in decision making and accounting.

1.1.4 There is a strong likelihood that MTC will wish to respond positively if it is requested by WC to take over additional public space management or other service responsibilities in the years to come.

1.2 These changes impact disproportionately on Town Hall and Facilities Committee (TH&F). As a consequence, P&R has concluded changes to MTC's current committee structure should be considered and wishes to make the proposals in 2.1 and 2.2 below for consideration by Full Council.

2. Proposal

2.1 To ensure an appropriate level of Councillor focus can be applied across all of the potential Town Hall and Facilities portfolio it is proposed that, as soon as possible, the current work of the Town Hall and Facilities Committee is divided between two new Committees:

2.1.1 Outside Spaces Committee

This would cover the operation, maintenance management and development of all MTC play park and public spaces outside of the Town Hall and include the Cemetery. This has the advantage of bringing together responsibility for all outside grounds works and the resources that tend them. Many management processes are common across the parks, outside spaces and cemetery and there is benefit in having a consistent asset management plan, risk assessment process and approach to community engagement. P&R noted that a similar combination of responsibilities is commonly operated by other Town Councils.

2.1.2 Town Hall Committee

This would cover the operation and management of the Town Hall and ancillary buildings, including achieving contribution budgets for room hire, the cinema, sub lettings and associated activities and

the new toilet project. It would also be responsible for the maintenance of our other buildings including the lodge, chapel, cemetery toilet, St Aldhelm's Mead toilet and the Market Cross.

It is also noted that some Town Hall related operations are currently given oversight by Community and Town Promotion Committee (C&TP). To reduce overlap and ambiguity it is proposed that:

- The management of the John Bowen Gallery is transferred from C&TP to this newly defined Town Hall Committee.
- The maintenance of the TIC area, including the delivery of the current TIC refurbishment project, is managed by the newly defined Town Hall Committee, working with input from C&TP.

Taken together these changes would bring all Town Hall management and development matters and the specialisms of buildings management under the brief of one committee. This will clarify revenue generation responsibility, enable the operation of a common booking system, ensure consistent good service to facility users, and support the development of a co-ordinated asset management plan and development plan.

2.1.3 Community and Town Promotion Committee

In addition, it is proposed that Community and Town Promotion Committee is given a specific additional objective to review and seek to develop youth services.

2.2 To note the proposals in 2.1 and, to enable them to be fully considered, that Council agrees that current Committees are invited to consider them and report back any questions, observations or alternative proposals to the Chair of P&R at the earliest opportunity and no later than the 30th June 2019. P&R will then consider these responses and make a final recommendation to Full Council, with a view to agreed changes to the current committee structure being implemented in September 2019.

3. Financial Considerations

3.1 The current proposal could lead to a small increase in the overall number of MTC Committee meetings requiring officer support as the current JBC, which has four to five meetings a year, will be replaced by a Parks and Outside Spaces Committee, which might be expected to meet nine times a year. However, the total committee time should not be more than if this change is not implemented as, otherwise, Town Hall and Facilities meetings would otherwise be expected to become longer or more frequent.

3.2 Current budgets will need to be re-allocated to each Committee.

3.3 It is also likely that the proposed changes to the Committee structure will help the timely and co-ordinated management of activities, which may increase MTC operational efficiency and support overall cost management.

4. Operational Considerations

Any new Committee structure will require Councillor support. The net effect of the current proposal is that two Councillors may join one more committee than at present.

Campbell Ritchie
15th April 2019