



**ASHBOURNE TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL**

11th June 2018

Report of the Town Clerk

Town Hall Fascia PWBL Business Case

Loan Value 50,000 over 3 years

Description of the Project

Ashbourne Town Hall is the main civic building in the centre of Ashbourne and the administrative home of Ashbourne Town Council. It also houses Ashbourne Visitor Information Centre which provides important local and regional tourist advice and support with an annual footfall in excess of 30,000. It is a major community resource to Ashbourne with many community organisations using the Town Hall on a weekly basis providing leisure and sporting events for over 250 people every week. It is the main venue for the Ashbourne Arts Festival which attracts thousands of local people and visitors to the town bringing a wide range of local, regional and national artists every June and July. The Town Hall supports civic, heritage, market, sporting, leisure and other events in Ashbourne.

Located in Market Place the Town Hall is a very significant community resource and provides Ashbourne with its community heart. It is a Grade 2 listed building with architectural significance. The 1861 building is constructed in stone in an eclectic Italianate style of which the façade onto the Market Square is the most significant. The architect was Benjamin Wilson



Over the last few years Ashbourne Town Council has invested significant public resources to remodel the Town Hall. In 2014 the Ashbourne Visitor Information Centre was relocated into the Town Hall when Derbyshire Dales District Council decided to close the facility which was previously located in the Market Square. In addition, this improvement programme included the upgrading of the ground floor meeting room to enhance this important facility which is well used for public meeting and events. The total cost of the improvement programme was £95,664 and was funded by the Town Council.

During 2016 the façade of the building facing the Market Square was showing signs of serious deterioration and small elements of masonry fell from the building. This resulted in the Town Council having to take protective measures as well as commissioning a comprehensive assessment by a professional stone mason (Jepson Cornerstone Ltd) to survey the building. The Town Council has further commissioned Jepson to provide a full scope of works and indicative costs and timescale for renovation works to take place.

The scope of renovation works required is substantial and well beyond the annual Town Hall budget for repair and modernisation works which for this financial year. The Town Council has a public duty to keep expenditure to a minimum in this period of national government austerity and therefore has decided to seek external funding to support what limited public funds that the Town Council can contribute to repairing and modernising this valuable public asset.

Breakdown of the proposed works

Guy Taylor Associates (Derby) Ltd (GTA) have been appointed by the Town Council as the Architects to oversee the project. GTA have developed a tender specification based on the scope of works identified by Jepson Cornerstone Ltd.

Estimated costs for the work

Four companies were invited to tender, however only two completed and submitted the tender application. Ashbourne Town Council resolved to appoint Bonsers Restoration to undertake the work at a cost of £162,179.68.

Both companies quoted a similar amount, see below.

1	Preliminaries	£26,974.39		£20,528.40
2	Preparatory Works	£7,498.56		£4,645.43
3	Masonry Works	£94,943.72		£105,797.08
4	Carpentry and Joinery Works	£8,033.50		£3,553.18
5	Roofing and Rainwater Goods	£1,423.50		£2,030.01
6	Secondary Glazing	£9,761.93		£10,160.62
7	New Glass Doors & Over Panel	£4,982.25		£6,961.46
8	Decorations	£3,460.20		£3,503.50
9	Contingency Sum	£5,000.00		£5,000.00
		£162,078.05		£162,179.68

The Town Council have accrued from 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 budgets a sum of £112,000 which they have allocated to the project.

Financial Planning to Fund the Loan Repayments

A three-year budget forecast to cover the period of the proposed loan as been produced identifying that that during the period of the loan the precept will remain at the current level.

Options in Place to Mitigate the Risk of not being able to afford the loan

The Town Council has produced a three-year forecast to cover the period of the loan, which includes the loan repayments and does not show an increase in the precept. The Town Council holds a reserve of £34,000 and in the unlikely event of the Town Council being in a position as not to afford the loan this could be used and the replenishment of this fund addressed in the future years precept.

The Town Council has chosen not to increase the precept to the tax payer in one go and decided to spread the cost over four years by applying for a PWLB loan which will be monitored as part of the budget process.

Public Consultation

A public consultation was undertaken in March 2017 and ran from 1st to the 31st March 2017. The consultation was undertaken through Survey Monkey. It was advertised in the following areas:

- The local newspaper – Ashbourne News Telegraph
- Advertised on the Town Hall Notice Board
- Advertised on the Elderly Persons Rest Room windows which is in the centre of the town
- Hard copies of the survey were issued to Town Hall users
- Advertised on the Town Council Website
- Flyers, posters and hard copies of the survey were displayed in the Ashbourne Visitor Information Centre
- Advertised on the Visitor Information Centres FaceBook Page
- Flyers and hard copies were left in the entrance of the Town Hall giving the opportunity for anyone using the Town Hall to participate

As well as the electronic survey hard copies were also available and after completion were deposited in a collection box inside of the Town Hall, these were then entered onto Survey Monkey.

The public and users of the building were asked “do you think that the Town Council should consider renovating the Town Hall” of which 90% said Yes.

When asked how the renovations should be funded the majority stated that is should be a mixture of undertaking the work in stages, applying for external funding and an increase in the Council tax.

The Town Council also asked if the Town Hall should be sold and alternative premises be sought, 90% said No the Town Hall should not be sold.

Following on from the survey a public meeting was held in St Oswald’s Church Hall on Monday 3rd April 2017 to consider the future of the Town Hall.