

REPORT TO THE FINANCE, EMPLOYMENT & SERVICES COMMITTEE



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Date	6th February 2024
Subject	Equipment Storage

PURPOSE:

1. To inform Members that the Council Officers are quickly running out of available storage in the Town Hall for Council owned equipment.
2. To gain authorisation from the Committee to rent a retail unit for this purpose.

BACKGROUND:

3. As the Town Council is evolving and the events are becoming larger due to increased footfall, the Town Council now has considerably more tools and equipment that it has done before.
4. The introduction of the Lengthsmen has led to tools and equipment being purchased to allow jobs to be undertaken in-house. Whilst saving the Council money, this does pose its own storage problems.
5. As Events are becoming larger and very well attended, the Town Council has been investing in additional events equipment, things such as sound and lighting, character costumes, crowd barriers and traffic barriers, to help reduce increasing hire costs.
6. The Town Council owns 20 gazebos, which it does hire out from time to time. The gazebos, along with the sides, ratchet straps and weights were originally being held by our Grounds Maintenance Contractor at the time. However, since the former did not regain the maintenance rights in the last Tender Process, the Town Council has had to find an alternative location to store them.
7. Up until very recently, the Gazebo equipment and event barriers have been stored in three garages that the Town Council was renting from Pendle Borough Council, at a nominal cost, that are situated at the back of the market.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

8. Due to the impending market regeneration, the garages at the back will be demolished, so Officers have had to move all the kit to the Town Hall for the time being.

9. This is causing access and safety issues, with equipment being dotted around the Town Hall and blocking the basement and ground floor corridors.
10. Officers have considered additional containers at Primet, however these are not suitable due to damp conditions. Indeed, we are having to look into finding a cost-effective way to insulate and ventilate the containers that we currently have, so this is not considered to be a viable option.
11. Given that Members are wanting Officers to make more use of the Town Hall, in terms of Community Groups and events, it is getting increasingly more difficult to maintain a secure and safe environment.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

12. Rental of a unit would come at considerable additional cost, given that the garages were being rented at a nominal amount per year.
13. After further investigation, secure units of appropriate size vary between £6,500 and £13,000 per Annum.
14. It is proposed that if the additional costs cannot be found within the main revenue budget, that the required funding is taken from the Town Hall Earmarked Reserve.

RECOMMENDATION:

15. That Members consider the rental of a unit of appropriate size and area for the safe and secure storage of the Town Council's assets.
16. That Members consider the use of the Town Hall EMR, should the need arise to take funding from reserves.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

17. To ensure a safe and secure environment for all users of the Town Hall building.
18. With the increased likelihood of transfer of services from the Borough Council, it is envisaged that the storage issues will only be compounded in future years.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS:

19. The Town Council have lost their current storage facilities and need to find an alternative solution going forward.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS:

20. If tools and equipment are constantly being moved around, there is more likelihood of damage in transit and the Town Council has a duty to protect and maintain the assets that it owns.

DETAILS OF CONSULTATION:

21. Various online Letting Agents, the Lengthsmen and Officers of the Council.

SUPPORTING PAPERS:

- None

FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT: Gina Langley