

# Hay Town Council

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Mayor  
Cllr T Stedman

14 December 2018

Clive Pinney  
Cllr Phyl Davies

Dear Clive & Cllr Davies,

## **Re: Your report to Cabinet on property related issues in Hay on Wye**

Thank you for sharing the draft report with us, although we have to say that we are rather disappointed at the inaccuracies contained within it. Additionally, not all of the options discussed with us at the meeting on 6 November 2018 have been included in the report; it is frustrating that Cabinet are not being presented with all the available options to enable effective decision making.

The points below cover both the inaccuracies and omissions:

**Your point 1.1:** the date of the cabinet meeting was 2015 not 2016 as stated.

The CAT policy in place at the time of the cabinet meeting and agreement was quite different to the current policy and we feel that our issues should still be considered under the terms of the previous policy. From my experience in business when a process is started it is subject to, and determined, by the policies and procedures in place at that time.

**Your point 1.2:** We agree that a number of people have been involved in this process and feel quite strongly that if the officers involved had acted promptly and effectively this situation would have been resolved in early 2017 prior to the change of cabinet and we would not be dealing with this situation.

**Your point 1.3:** Options have been *discussed* with Hay Town Council they have **not** been largely agreed.

**Your point 2.1:** The 20% of the net car park income was to cover the running costs of both the toilets and recreation facilities (as referenced in 1.1d) not purely for the running of the public toilets.

At the time that public toilets and recreation facilities were being transferred to town and community councils a number of grants were being made available to assist with running costs for up to five years. We gave up the opportunity to receive such grants by accepting the offer of the car park income. To date we have received no assistance from Powys County Council either through the promised car park income or via any of the grants that other town councils received.

It is inaccurate to say that similar arrangements have not been introduced elsewhere, it is our understanding that Welshpool Town Council currently receive 12.5% of gross car park income.

**Your point 2.2.1:** Who has considered all the options? As per our earlier point, in the interest of transparency and effective decision making shouldn't all options be put on the table for Cabinet to consider.

**Your point 2.3.1:** Our calculations suggest that around £75,000 should have been paid over to Hay Town Council by this point in time. These figures are based on our own conservative estimates and we would like to see actual figures of car park income for the last three /four years to ensure that there would be an actual 'offset' of the loan or whether we would be disadvantaged by this.

**Your point 2.3.2:** we would ask that you include our preferred option of continuing to run the toilets on behalf of PCC and receiving an annual grant making up the shortfall between received income and costs.

Over 90,000 people used the public toilets in Hay over the last year. The majority of this use is by visitors to the town who also contribute to PCC income through their use of the car park and also, to the economy generally. Hay Literary Festival, described by the Welsh Minister for Culture and Tourism as "one of Wales iconic events", has provided an economic boost to the Powys economy of over £70million in the last three years. This is just one of many events that attract visitors to the town.

**Your point 3.1:** as previously mentioned cabinet date was 2015 not 2016.

Our initial agreement to take over the recreation facilities on license in October 2016 was because we were expecting to complete a freehold transfer imminently. Powys council's policy may have changed but as per point 1.1 we strongly feel that the policy in place at the time should apply.

That said we are not averse to a 99 year lease providing that assurances are put in place with regard to development of the site by Hay Town Council.

**Your point 3.3.2b:** The Bowls Club Pavilion will be built and owned by them. They will be the only users and will be responsible for maintaining and repairing the building. Hay Town Council will retain responsibility for the existing pavilion which will continue to be used by other clubs and groups.

We would also expect to sub - let the bowls pitch to the Bowls Club.

**Your point 4.1:** The date of the cabinet meeting was 2015 not 2016 as stated. Our previous point on which policy should apply is reiterated here.

**Your point 4.3.1:** We would like some clarity on whether we will be required to give 12 months notice of termination of lease to the 8 businesses and charities that currently operate from this building. At the meeting on 6 November it was stated that PCC would not want to contribute to putting small companies out of business by taking away their offices/places of work.

You have also omitted to mention/consider that the Registrar service also operates from this building.

**Your point 5.1:** We believe that an impact assessment is required, several businesses and a charity that provides a transport service to elderly and less mobile residents will be impacted if they were also given notice to leave the council building. Additionally, an impact assessment in relation to closing public toilets that have over 90,000 users is an absolute must.

**Your point 6.1:** you mention just one element of the Powys Vision 2025 – what about the other elements “Working **with** communities, residents and businesses” and “focussing on solutions rather than problems”. We would like to understand how your proposals contribute to “supporting residents and communities” and “developing a vibrant economy”

**Your point 7.1:** I would add that the local member fully supports our viewpoint and has seen and agrees with this letter.

**Your point 8:** There is an impact on services run by the Council in that the Registrar is based in the council offices (RDC Building).

As an additional point, councillors were particularly disturbed to see that the Library Building in Hay has been put up for sale. This action is a direct contradiction to the information that we had previously been given i.e. that PCC would not be selling “the family silver” and that the library was to be offered on a commercial leasehold basis.

We appreciate that efforts are being made to push ahead with resolving the outstanding issues in Hay but would ask that inaccuracies in the report are amended and that our comments are given due consideration.

Cllr Trudy Stedman, Mayor  
On behalf of Hay Town Council

