

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING 18TH MAY 2018

08/18 QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR D FLORENCE-JUKES

(Bold font denotes question; regular font denotes response from the Leader of the Council)

Following the recent move back to the iconic Town Hall building by East Staffordshire Borough Council after a 7 year period of being located at the Maltsters, I have been contacted by a great many of my residents in Horninglow who are truly outraged and disgusted by the ill-conceived decision taken by this Conservative Controlled Council to move out of the Town Hall, on the pretext of saving the taxpayers of this Borough money, only to return 7 years later, once again on the pretext of saving money. My residents demand to know how much taxpayers money has been wasted on these moves.

Members should be aware that the move to the Maltsters in 2011 and the recent move to the Old Town Hall will deliver ongoing revenue savings of c£0.5m per annum from the current financial year (2018/19). This has been delivered during unprecedented funding reductions to local authorities and enabled the council to keep Council tax frozen thus demonstrating value for money to our residents, despite calls from some councillors to increase tax.

I would ask Councillor Florence-Jukes to justify her insinuation especially the reference to the '*pretext of saving money*', which is bordering on bringing the Council's reputation into disrepute, if she is suggesting there is an ulterior motive.

In the interests of transparency I would also ask the member how many Horninglow residents have contacted her, as to my knowledge there have been no similar queries or issues raised by the other two long-standing Councillors Built and Johnston, nor have there been from all the other wards across the Borough.

On behalf of the people of Horninglow and all other residents of East Staffordshire, I call upon the Leader of East Staffordshire Borough Council, Councillor Richard Grosvenor, to provide the taxpayers of this Borough with a full and accurate breakdown of the total costs incurred of moving out of the Town Hall in 2011 and into the Maltsters and then out of the Maltsters in 2018 and back into the Town Hall.

In the interests of being open, transparent and accountable, please ensure the breakdown includes *all costs* associated with both moves (in, out, out and in again).

Although not an exhaustive list, costs are *likely* to include; planning fees, consultant and professional fees including, Pozzoni Architects, Appleyard & Trew Quantity Surveyors, Mechanical and Engineering consultancy fees. The cost of the full market tender exercise in selecting companies to carry out the build works to the Town Hall. The refurbishment costs to the Town Hall.

The Cabinet Report into Accommodation which was approved in June 2017 after gaining approval through the cross party working groups and going through the

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political discussion meetings, and included a detailed cost/savings analysis covering 5 years showing ongoing savings to the revenue budget of £0.23m from 2018/19 onwards as a result of the move to the Old Town Hall. The council received a capital receipt of £1,000,000 in 2014/15 for the sale of the Town Hall Annexe.

The estimated refurbishment costs were set out in the Cabinet Report of June 2017. This figure was £874,739 and included:

Main contract to Novus	£692,364
CFS W/C refurbishment costs	£96,625
ICT costs	£65,000
Professional fees includes Architects, Quantity Surveyors, Mechanical Engineering Consultancy	£20,750
Total	£874,739

This is consistent with what has been reported in the Quarterly Financial updates to Cabinet and groups. The actual costs are not yet finalised whilst we await final completion certificates and completion of snagging issues.

The EDR signed in March 2017 approved the spend of £48,045 for the feasibility study to move to the Old Town Hall. This included architects and consultants' fees and tender documentation. The actual spend on the feasibility study was £47,100 as follows:

Pozzoni Architects	£21,000
Patrick Parsons M&E	£11,100
Appleyard & Trew QS	£13,250
Other surveyor fees	£1,750
Total	£47,100

Calculations show that between the period 2011/12 – 2022/23 there will be savings to the revenue budget of £4,135,000 as a result of the accommodation moves.

This cost of the full market tender exercise was predominantly officer time which is a sunk cost.

The removal costs for both moves (believed to be £10,510.02 when moving out of the Town Hall in 2011)

2011 £10,510.02

2018 £17,476.65 estimated cost based on quote. Final invoice not yet received.

These amounts include the costs incurred from the contracted removal firms such as labour and crate hire.

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All ICT costs including, setting up in the Maltsters followed by the setting up of a server room and the data connections necessary for the move back to the Town Hall.

2011 £88,484

2018 £6,000. There was a further £65,000 included within the contract figure set out above.

Costs for housing the Licensing Team at Millers Lane.

£3,404.50

This figure includes electrical rewiring and carpet cleaning.

Please also include the annual fee for 'empty' business rates which taxpayers were still liable to pay for the periods 2011 – 2018 (believed to be £55,901.50 for 2017/18), Please provide the information as a breakdown in individual costs incurred followed by a total amount

The figure of £55,901.50 was for business rates for the town hall, which includes the accommodation necessary for the civic function suite activities as well as office space. The town hall has never been empty.