

Notice of Question to be asked at F&GP Meeting of Battle Town Council to be held on Tuesday 28 September 2021.

The question relates to the Almonry Project and is in 9 parts.

A). Item : Heating.

Will the Council confirm that, before the contract for works had been issued, no calculation had been made of the heat loss to be expected from the building; no effective calculation of the number /output of electric heaters required to heat the building to working occupation standards had been made; no calculation to determine the required power source into the building had been made?

Carnell Warren as part of the design team carried out a detailed heat loss of the property and carried out a design to heat the property via gas fired boilers this scheme was designed to RIBA stage 3.



The existing pipework and plant equipment was in such a poor state that it was unable to be reused in the new proposals and so the scheme included all new pipework, where possible running in existing routes, due to the listed nature of the building. This would however involve creating openings and removing floor wall and ceiling finishes.

This scheme was sent out to the tendering contractors to price.

The gas fired boiler scheme that was tendered proved to be too expensive for the project to be viable. The contractor suggested value engineering the scheme to remove the gas boiler and associated works and instead install an electric heating system, this would save services installation costs as well as reducing the openings required in the listed building.

This was not an option considered at the earlier design stage as there are drawbacks to the electric heating system including poorer CO2 emissions per kW and increased running costs. (albeit gas prices have risen since this discussion) Due to the large associated costs with the installation of the gas fired boiler scheme it was decided to proceed along this route. The council were also mindful of the consensus to move

away from gas fired boilers and the electric option was seen as a future proofing measure.

The contractor is responsible for the stage 4 design onwards and so took control of the electrical heating design including ascertaining whether a larger incoming supply would be required through carrying out calculations of their own and liaising with UKPN. It was calculated that the existing supply was not sufficient for the electrical heating scheme and so the applications were made to the statutory authority. These costs could only be realised when the project designer from UKPN was able to confirm whether the local infrastructure was capable of accommodating the additional load.

The electrical radiators have been sized in accordance with this heat loss calculation carried out prior to the tender process.

That, as a result of these omissions the need for an increase in power supply was not expected?

The increase in power was a result of the original gas fired scheme becoming unviable due to cost.

Will the Council advise what is the unbudgeted extra cost due to this omission and what impact in terms of delay time has followed?

£13,754.37 for the upgrade of supply. There will be a delay in installation of the supply by UKPN, but this will not delay physical completion of the project. Use of the whole building will not be available until this is installed.

Does the Council accept this was a failure by the Architect and their specialists and of Project Management?

This is not accepted, it is unfortunate there are additional costs associated with the incoming supply, but the alternative was an even greater cost of installing a gas fired solution, or retaining the existing system which would have failed within a short period potentially causing damage to the listed property. The replacement of which would require the same strategy employed currently.

B). The cost of meeting the Conservation Conditions related to the Planning Consent for the lift.

Does the Council accept I asked what these costs would be at the 23 March Full Council meeting and that it is referred to in 3 subsequent sets of Full Council meetings up to 18 May 2021.

On 23rd March 2021, a member of the public requested the cost for compliance with the planning permission.

On 20th April 2021, the clerk reported that the cost implications for the conditions applied to the planning conditions were not confirmed.

There were no questions at Public Question Time on 18th May 2021.

Does the Council accept no answer was given?

No - on 20th April 2021, the clerk reported that the cost implications for the conditions applied to the planning conditions were not confirmed.

However, no written response was provided to the member of the public; only via publication of the minutes, for transparency.

Will the Council now disclose the full cost of meeting these planning Conditions?

The condition in relation to the lift was purely colour choice of bronze. This was then discussed and a standard dark grey colour accepted but this was not an additional item.

Not sure with the way this question is worded whether the resident wants to know the cost of the lift or the cost of meeting the conditions. The cost of the lift however is £10,732.00

The Yorkstone cost is awaited from the QS due to discussions confirming the new stone (cheaper but a longer delivery time) rather than reclaimed which was significantly higher in cost but immediately available.

Does the Council accept that it made a decision to proceed without knowing or approving the costs?

Council had made a decision to move forward with the project. Complying with Planning Conditions is not optional. The Architect and QS have negotiated with the Conservation Officer to minimise cost. The Clerk has delegated authority to make urgent decisions on behalf of Council, in consultation with Chairman / Vice Chairman of Council. The delay of the project would have far outweighed the cost of meeting the conservation conditions.

Does the Council concur this is unacceptable in principle?

No

C) Did the 'Project Management process', such as it was, identify High Risk areas for **PHYSICAL** re-examination before signing the contract and commencing work and if not, why not?

I am satisfied that as much of the roof tiling as possible was inspected from ladder access by an experienced and respected, conservation minded, roofer prior to

scheme preparation, whilst obviously acknowledging that this could never be a full appraisal without proper scaffold access.

D) Was a drone survey done of the roof - as a particular high risk area- if not, why not?

My experience of drone surveys is that whilst this may pick up a few cracked or eroded tiles, this is no substitute to gaining direct access and the suggestion for “physical re-inspection” prior to signing any contract would have meant erecting a full scaffold at that time, which would not have been practicable. Also, this is not the way that the letting of contracts of this kind is done. It is also worth mentioning that a drone survey would not have picked up any instability issues associated with the chimneys.

E) At the Full Council meeting a resident, Mr B Marks, raised the very serious issue of pedestrian safety outside of the Almonry during these works. Did the schedule of works specify delivery times and protocols? If not, why not?

There were discussions on appropriate delivery options prior to contract signing.

Does the Council accept that it and it's contractors could have handled this whole issue in a more professional and competent way to ensure the safety of resident and visitor pedestrians?

No – there have been ongoing discussions with the relevant authorities from the start and VE have responded immediately to concerns that have been raised.

F) The last decision to pay the Architects a substantial sum was, it was claimed, to provide Profession Project Management. In view of the above, are the Council satisfied with the standard of Professional Service provided. What is the estimated final cost of their 'Project Management' to the Council?

There have been discussions with the Architect regarding Project Management. The estimated cost to the Architect to provide several roles, including Project Management, is around 3% of the agreed contract £541,460.84

G) What was the Projected Completion date for the Project in the Contract.

Project Completion date as contract – 13th September 2021.

What is the projected date for the Almonry to be in use by the Council?

Projected completion date for the Almonry as of todays meeting – 01st November 2021.

What is the projected date for full completion of the Project?

Projected completion date for the full completion (including UKPN connection) as of today's meeting – 01st March 2022

H) Increases in costs have been reported at various times. For simplicity please answer the following.

What was the agreed Contract Price?

Agreed contract sum – £541,460.84

What is the current projected Total Project Cost.

Projected Total Project Cost as of Cost report 2 - £593,266.68

Of the difference what is the Cost of works due to items arising from additional repair work.

Splitting out the costs into specific headings if required will need an exercise done that will not be ready in time for your meeting. Roof repairs works as the latest cost report is an additional £14,481.50.

What is the Cost works due to failure to properly plan the work, ie The Heating and meeting the Conservation conditions?

Not sure any costs are associated with the failure to properly plan the work.

I) Does the Council accept the Project Management has been inadequate? If not, why not?

The Clerk has raised some concerns to the professionals and Council will discuss further when appropriate.

Key:

Questioner

Council response

Carnell Williams

EAR Sheppard

Blade Consulting

A separate response from the Architect is attached in full.