

Report – Alternative premises for Oakham Town Council

Introduction

The current premises at ROL House have been deemed unsuitable as the offices and chamber for Oakham Town Council for the following reasons:

1. The offices are not a healthy environment for permanent staff, there being insufficient natural light and window height that prohibits an external view
2. Due to a recent spate of criminal activity, including violence, it is deemed to be unsafe for council staff and members
3. There is insufficient car parking for staff, members and public
4. Being shared access, there are issues with lack of security and noise interference
5. Accessibility is not practical with disabled access not being at the front.

As a result, a task and finish group was established to look at alternative options and from this exercise, as the Victoria Hall is being sold, there is just one feasible option, that being the Oakham Town Council premises at Princess Avenue. This has been deemed very suitable for a number of reasons as follows:

- a. The premises are owned by OTC and therefore no rent would be chargeable which is currently £9,500 p.a.
- b. The refurbishment cost could be funded by CIL moneys, on the proviso that the facility had multi-purpose use involving free community activity
- c. The premises can be tailored to the specific requirements of OTC
- d. With an estimated refurbishment cost of around £70,000, there is an estimated payback time of a maximum of 7 years, after which there will be no rent to pay, allowing the use of those funds for other Oakham projects
- e. It will be possible to rent out the shared facility, providing long-term income for OTC
- f. Through funding from CIL funds, it will upgrade the premises to current building regulations and facilities fit for a town council and for the Oakham community.

RCC have confirmed that we can use CIL for the building renovation. We cannot use CIL for office use furniture or moving costs. Council have budgeted already for moving costs.

Conclusion

The Task and Finish Group recommend that Oakham Town Council undertake the refurbishment of Princess Avenue and move the office and chamber there. Half of the building would be office use and the other half community use.