

Purpose of Report

1. To consider an appropriate governance model for the current stage of the Heritage Centre's development.

Background

2. The Council's Heritage Centre has been open and operating for almost a year. It is not yet fully operating in the way originally envisaged by the Council, but it is at an early stage in its development, and has made a very sound start.
3. The Centre's governance, however, has not moved on from the Steering Group that was set up to oversee the building works and initial concepts. Day to day operating decisions are currently being undertaken by the Centre Manager, in consultation with the Town Clerk as necessary. Whilst this is appropriate for operational decisions, it is being done without a framework to maintain a policy lead from Elected Members, and so runs the risk of diverging from the Council's vision for the establishment.
4. In the longer term, once the Centre is fully established, the Council should be able to absorb it into its normal sub-committee framework. Whilst the Centre is still developing, however, I do not believe that this would be the most effective approach to governance. The report sets out the recommended approach.

Proposals

5. It is proposed that a new Heritage Centre Steering Group be established, reporting to the General Purposes Committee, to take forward the next stage of the Centre's development.
6. It is likely that a steering group would be able to be more flexible to provide the leadership and support currently needed for the Centre than managing it directly by either a sub-committee or committee. It would allow steering group members to provide policy leadership, whilst still allowing scope for major policy decisions to be referred back to this Committee, and officers to continue to undertake operational decisions within the Council's policy framework.
7. If the Committee support this approach, the current Steering Group should be disbanded, and a new one formed on the basis suggested below.
8. **Membership:** There should be five Councillor members of the steering group as follows:
 - a. Ex-Officio – Chairman of the General Purposes Committee and Chairman of the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee.

- b. Three other Councillors as appointed by this Committee each May. (NOTE: In common with all Council bodies, the Mayor would also be an additional ex-officio member)
- 9. **Co-opted Members:** The steering group members should also be free to co-opt any additional members to the group that they considered helpful to their work, subject to the usual arrangements for approval by the General Purposes Committee.
- 10. **Chairmanship:** The steering group should be chaired by the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.
- 11. **Meetings:** Should be called by the Town Clerk, in consultation with the Chairman, as and when required to undertake the business of the group.
- 12. A draft terms of reference for the proposed new Stone Heritage Centre Steering Group is attached as an appendix to the report.

Interim Arrangements

- 13. In order to allow the new steering group to start work immediately, it is suggested that if the Committee supports these proposals, it makes the following appointments to the new steering group today:
 - a. The two ex-officio members, as set out in paragraph 8.a above.
 - b. The two other Councillor members of the current steering group (Councillors P Leason and J Davies).
 - c. One other Councillor.

Conclusion

- 14. This report has set out proposed arrangements for the governance of the Heritage Centre to meet its current needs. The proposals are not intended as a long term arrangement, but should be reviewed once the Centre is fully established.

Recommendations

- 15. The Committee is recommended to:
 - a. Disband the current Heritage Centre Steering Group
 - b. Establish a new Heritage Centre Steering Group along the lines set out in this report and the attached terms of reference, and appoint Councillor members to the Group as set out in paragraph 13 above.
 - c. Adopt the terms of reference in the report appendix.

8 HERITAGE CENTRE STEERING GROUP

PURPOSE

- 8.1 The purpose of the Heritage Centre Steering Group is to oversee the development of the Stone Heritage Centre, and to make recommendations to the General Purposes Committee accordingly.

MEMBERSHIP AND APPOINTMENT

- 8.2 The Steering Group shall consist of five members, drawn from the membership of the Town Council. The Chairmen of the General Purposes Committee and the Tourism and Town Promotion Sub-Committee shall be ex-officio members of the Group. Other Councillor members shall be appointed by the General Purposes Committee at its meeting each May, but may be changed by that Committee at any time. The Group may co-opt additional non-Councillor members subject to the approval of the General Purposes Committee
- 8.3 In addition to the above, the Town Mayor shall be an ex-officio member of the Steering Group if not directly appointed in their own right.

CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN

- 8.4 The Chairman of the Group shall be the Chairman of the General Purposes Committee.
- 8.5 The Vice Chairman, if appointed, shall be selected by the Group from amongst its Councillor members.
- 8.6 If neither the Chairman nor the Vice Chairman are able to preside at a meeting of the Steering Group, the members of the Steering Group present shall elect a Town Councillor as a temporary Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

QUORUM

- 8.7 No business shall be dealt with unless at least three Councillor members of the Steering Group are present. If there is no quorum, all items for which the Steering Group would be inquorate shall be deferred until the next meeting of the Steering Group.

ATTENDANCE BY COUNCILLORS WHO ARE NOT MEMBERS OF THE STEERING GROUP

- 8.8 Any member of the Council who is not a member of the Steering Group may attend a meeting and may speak on any item, if invited by the Chairman in advance of the meeting. Such a member may not make or second any proposals or amendments, and may not vote.
- 8.9 The requirements of the Council's Code of Conduct will apply to all Councillors and non-Councillor members present at the meeting, whether members of the Steering Group or not.

ATTENDANCE BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC

- 8.10 Meetings will not be open to the public.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 8.11 Meetings will be called by the Town Clerk as required, on dates agreed with the Chairman.

AGENDA AND PROCEEDINGS

- 8.12 There is no requirement for either a formal agenda or minutes.
- 8.13 The agenda, if any, shall be drawn up and circulated by the Town Clerk.
- 8.14 Meeting notes will be prepared by the Council's staff, but will not normally be circulated to the General Purposes Committee for consideration, and will not form part of the official minutes of the Council.
- 8.15 The calling of meetings, booking of venues, etc. will be undertaken by the Town Council's staff.
- 8.16 The provisions of the Council's Standing Orders for Business shall not apply to meetings of the Steering Group other than to the extent determined by the Chairman to ensure the orderly and efficient conduct of business.
- 8.17 Where appropriate, the Steering Group has the power to establish sub-groups from within its membership to deal with specific work streams. Recommendations to the General Purposes Committee must, however, be considered and agreed by the Steering Group prior to presentation.

REPORTING

- 8.18 Decisions of the Steering Group shall have the status of recommendations to the General Purposes Committee, other than where they represent guidance to the Town Clerk in the exercise of delegated powers.

- 8.19 At each scheduled meeting of the General Purposes Committee, the Chairman or their nominated representative will be expected to report on the work of the Group, and to present any recommendations to the Committee. Such recommendations will not be considered by the Committee without a full written report or detailed minutes circulated with the meeting agenda and setting out the nature of the recommendations and their implications for the Council.

FUNCTIONS

- 8.20 To oversee the development of the Stone Heritage Centre and to make recommendations to the General Purposes Committee accordingly.
- 8.21 To advise the General Purposes Committee on its strategic policies relating to the development of the Heritage Centre
- 8.22 To provide guidance to the Town Clerk in respect of Heritage Centre exhibition and other policies.

RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER COUNCIL BODIES

- 8.23 Whilst the Steering Group is responsible for overseeing the development of the Heritage Centre, it should be noted that policy issues related to management, staffing and finance fall under the purview of the General Purposes Committee, even where they relate to the Heritage Centre.
- 8.24 If a difference of opinion develops between this Steering Group and any other Council body, the General Purposes Committee shall determine how the matter will be resolved.

DURATION

- 8.25 The Steering Group is intended to be an interim body to provide oversight of the Heritage Centre during its development phase. It will operate until the General Purposes Committee is satisfied that this phase is completed and the Centre's governance can be integrated into the Council's normal operations.