

Cabinet – 13 February 2019

Withdrawal of Maintenance Funding For St Lawrence Church Clock, Darlaston

Portfolio: Councillor Harris

Related portfolios:

Service: Integrated Facilities Management

Wards: Darlaston South

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Summary

- 1.1 The St Lawrence Church Clock, Victoria Road, Wednesbury, Darlaston has an historic agreement for funding of the operation and maintenance costs from Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council from 1976 and 1979.
- 1.2 Budget restrictions on the maintenance budgets have made the continuation of this service funding unsustainable. Funding available will be required to be targeted at the operation maintenance of Walsall Metropolitan Borough council assets.
- 1.3 A final repair has been agreed to be undertaken, after which it is proposed to return all financial liabilities to the owner.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That funding for the operational and maintenance costs for the St Lawrence Church clock, Darlaston, Victoria Road, Wednesbury be withdrawn and no longer be the responsibility of Walsall Metropolitan Council

3. Report detail

- 3.1 It was agreed in the Highways and Public Works Committee's meeting held on the 17th June 1976 that Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council would fund the Maintenance costs for the clock in the St Lawrence church tower. (Item Number 1916)
- 3.2 It was agreed in the Highways and Public Works Committee's meeting held on the 14th June 1979 that Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council would fund the operational costs for the clock in the St Lawrence church tower. (Item Number 4787)

- 3.3 The funding for works and maintenance on the church clock is allocated via the current Monuments revenue budget. The revenue budget has a sum £15K per year, this is to fund all works on clocks, war memorials and organs within the Walsall metropolitan Council responsibility.
- 3.4 Due to financial pressures on the Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council it is proposed to withdraw the funding for the operational and maintenance costs for the St Lawrence church clock. The memorial revenue allocated budget is required to be allocated to Walsall Council owned assets to ensure these do not fall into disrepair. Officers are not aware of any other historic decisions of the Council to fund other church clocks in the Borough.
- 3.5 A repair to the clock mechanism is required and the repair works require a specialist contractor. Funding has been agreed to the value of £3,825 Plus VAT for this repair, all listed building permissions are in place. The intention following this repair that the responsibility will be return to St Lawrence Church for all future operational and maintenance costs and liabilities.

4. Council Corporate Plan priorities

The removal of the funding for the operational and maintenance costs for the St Lawrence church clock will enable funding to be targeted at Walsall Council Assets.

5. Risk management

There are grants available for the St Lawrence Church to apply for to assist with the future funding of the Church clock maintenance.

6. Financial implications

The Financial savings will be minimal from a daily operational perspective, although it will reduce the financial risk from future large scale repairs or maintenance costs involved in correctly maintaining an ageing asset.

7. Legal implications

There are no legal implications with this proposal

8. Procurement implications/Social Value

There are no procurement implications with this proposal

9. Property implications

None

10. Health and wellbeing implications

None

11. Staffing implications

None

12. Reducing inequalities

None

13. Consultation

Representatives of the Church have been informed of Cabinets consideration of removing the funding. At the time of the report being written no formal communication had been received from contacts at St Lawrence Church.

Background papers

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13 February 2019



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13 February 2019