

## Report of the Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services

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### **Subject: Green Room Redevelopment – Budget and Next Steps**

#### Purpose of Report

To provide Members with an overview of the potential next steps necessary to redevelop the Green Room and agree an indicative budget from the Authority's reserves.

#### Introduction

At the National Park Authority (NPA) meeting held on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021, Members agreed that the replacement of the committee room (known as the Green Room) at the Authority's HQ building in Llanion Park should be considered in order to provide modern meeting facilities to serve future committee, staff and community meetings and to enable the Authority to meet new legal requirements, such as the requirement to web cast meetings.

The current meeting facilities are comprised of a series of Portakabins installed over twenty years ago as a temporary measure that, whilst functional, always came with a number of limitations and compromises including poor energy efficiency and poor sound insulation. Similarly, the nature of the current facilities makes it difficult to upgrade or 'retro-fit' new technologies and equipment in order to meet legal and contemporary meeting requirements.

#### Proposal

The outline proposal is to replace the existing meeting room, kitchen area and toilets with a single storey building with a slightly larger footprint than the existing Portakabins. It is felt that a single storey replacement will help keep costs as low as possible and have minimal impact on neighbouring properties whilst meeting related Building Regulations with regards to accessibility (e.g. providing good wheelchair access).

Outline estimated requirements (based on committee layout):

- 25 people seated in the round
- 20 people in rows
- flexibility in layout for future use / adaptability
- the ability to hold multi-locational meetings and to web cast meetings
- care regarding acoustics and light control due to screens / IT equipment etc.

#### Location

The new facility is to be located between the North and South Blocks of Llanion Park in the approximate position of the existing Portakabin (Green Room). The meeting

room should be capable of separate occupation with access off the existing reception area (i.e. so it can be used without the main PCNPA HQ building being open).

Construction principles

The building will be constructed to Welsh Government Sustainable standards using responsibly sourced materials in order to minimise “construction miles”, it will be both “low energy” and highly insulated in order to limit the associated carbon footprint in-line with PCNPA’s Responding to the Climate Change Emergency – Delivery Action Plan. The new building will share the benefits of Llanion Park’s existing sustainable technologies i.e. Biomass heating, PV’s, solar hot water system and rainwater harvesting.

Cost estimate

Due to the rapidly rising cost of materials and their availability the Authority has received some initial advice from a QS consultant to help estimate the associated construction costs as detailed below.

The costings are based on a larger building footprint (an additional 3 metres extending towards the North Block) of approximately 155m2.

In summary the total cost estimate is:

Approximate cost of works	c. £320k
Fees	c. £30k
Removal of old building	c. £10k
Alterations to existing (HQ) building	c. £50k
Total	<u>c. £410k</u>

\*Note the above total does not include fixtures and fittings (e.g. furniture, IT equipment etc.)

Financial considerations

It is estimated that the total cost of the project will be close to £500K once all secondary costs have been included (fixtures and fittings, furniture, IT equipment, etc). As a result, it is recommended that the Authority sets aside the full £500K from reserves to fund the project with the majority of spend to be incurred in the 2022/23 financial year. The majority of this funding will be allocated from Capital Receipts, around £370K, with any additional money coming from the General Reserve. If the Authority identifies alternative sources of funding then it will bid for this funding, however, in order not to delay the process, it will proceed on the basis that it will cover the costs from its Reserves.

Estimated timescale / programme

Member approval to proceed and budget confirmation	Sept 2021
Appoint consultants and prepare sketch proposals	Dec 2021
Approve design and prepare planning application	Feb 2022
Procurement	June 2022
Construction	Aug 2022
Completion	March 2023

### Risk considerations

The limited availability of building materials and suitable contractors is a very real risk in the current climate and could cause significant delays to the project. Similarly, the Building Projects Manager already has a substantial workload as the Authority delivers a wide variety of externally funded capital projects over the next few years and, as a result, the team's capacity will need to be closely monitored.

The total build period will last between 6-9 months and during this period alternative meeting facilities will be required. The Administration and Democratic Services Manager will work with Members over the coming months to agree the interim arrangements necessary to support committee meetings until the Green Room has been replaced in 2023.

To help manage the risks it is suggested that a bespoke 'Green Room Development Group' is established to oversee the delivery of the project. It is proposed that the group is chaired by the Director of Countryside, Community and Visitor Services with assistance from relevant PCNPA staff, two representative NPA Members and appointed consultants / design team. Minutes from Group meetings will be presented to the following National Park Authority meeting to ensure that all Members are kept up to date on progress.

### Recommendations

Members are asked to agree the following three recommendations:

1. To agree to the replacement of the Green Room as set out in this paper.
2. To agree that £500K is allocated from reserves to fund the project.
3. To set up a "Green Room Development Group" to oversee the delivery of the project and to nominate two NPA members to sit on the proposed development group.

### Background Documents

NPA Report (#20/21) '[Means of holding committee meetings in future](#)' – considered at the NPA meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2021.

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